

BERTRAND RUSSELL

Which Way
to
Peace

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CHAPTER ONE

The Imminent Danger of War



THE GOVERNMENTS OF EUROPE DISAGREE ON MANY subjects, but on one point they are in perfect harmony : they all believe that a new Great War is imminent. Many signs, more convincing than mere words, show that this is their expectation. The British Government proves it by the frantic haste with which it is increasing the army, the navy, and especially the air force. Very ominous is the proposal, influentially supported though not yet adopted, to finance this increase by means of a loan ; for a financially prudent nation, such as the British have always been, will not resort to loans except for temporary objects : if the armed forces were not soon to find employment in war, it would be a spendthrift policy to borrow any part of their cost. So, in the last years before 1914, the Germans financed their navy largely by loans, and thus

showed their expectation of an early war. Now, every great country in Europe is piling up armaments until they become a burden that must soon be felt intolerable unless the apprehension of war is continually heightened ; and the universal apprehension is itself a most potent cause of war. Fear of war is used to justify armaments ; armaments increase the fear of war ; and the fear of war increases the likelihood of war. From this vicious circle, some governments do not wish to find an issue, and other are unable to do so.

Another evidence of the expectations of governments is the institution of civilian air drill in England, France, Germany, and Tokyo. The British Government must certainly have been very reluctant to take this measure, since it was alarming to ordinary citizens, and proved that prevention of air attack on London and other centres of population was thought impossible. In Great Britain, whatever may be the case elsewhere, this measure has had a powerful effect in promoting pacifist feeling, by showing what non-combatants have to look forward to in the next war ; the authorities would therefore certainly have postponed it if they had thought it at all possible to do so.

The state of Europe, it must be admitted, gives ample ground for pessimism. The Continent is

divided into two camps : Germany, Italy, Austria, Hungary, and perhaps Poland, on the one side : France, Russia, Belgium, the Little Entente, and probably Turkey, on the other. Great Britain is undecided, but is expected by almost everybody to take one side or the other when the clash comes. The Nazis, whose whole philosophy is warlike, wish to wipe out what they consider the disgrace of Germany's defeat in the last war, and cannot do so, to their own satisfaction, except by a war in which their country is victorious. They have also very powerful economic and political reasons for war : except by victory over foreign enemies, they do not feel sure of being able to preserve their dominion at home. The Italians have just had a taste of easy and profitable war, won by flouting all decent opinion ; immense gains are open to them if they can defeat the British in the Mediterranean, and under their present ruler they are not likely to forego the opportunity when it comes. The Japanese are rapidly absorbing China, but cannot feel secure while they are menaced from Vladivostock with the danger of air attack upon their vital centres of population and industry.

The French, meanwhile, whose governments have been dominated, ever since 1871, by fear and hatred of Germany, are horrified by the monster that their

own short-sighted oppression has raised up ; they are convinced, whatever Hitler may say to reassure them, that, if he is allowed to be victorious in the East, their turn will come next ; they observe that German military strength increases with almost unbelievable rapidity ; and they deduce that, since a trial of strength must come, the sooner it comes the better. They are waiting only for a suitable issue, and the assurance (if possible) of British support. The Soviet Government, openly threatened by Hitler, would like to avoid war, but does not expect to be able to do so, the more so as Germany, in an attack on Russia, can count on the help of Japan. Consequently the Russians have been compelled to divert to military preparation efforts which they can ill spare from economic reconstruction ; and like the French, they have motives, if there must be a contest, for wishing it to come soon.

The Germans are restrained, at the moment, by the fact that their strength is increasing ; the French are egged on by the fact that their relative strength is diminishing. As soon as both sides see a good prospect of victory, the war will come ; and in view of the illusions fostered by national vanity, it is not likely that the moment can be long postponed.

It is impossible to guess on what issue the war will break out. There are no Archdukes left to be assassinated, but the British are still pledged to defend Belgium. Perhaps some eminent Nazi, no longer popular with his colleagues, will be murdered, and will be said to have been killed by a Soviet secret agent. Perhaps the freedom of the Press in Danzig or Memel will be championed by Moscow. Perhaps some Government, thinking that the right moment has come, will cause some important town on its own territory to be bombed from the air on a dark night, and will loudly assert that enemy aeroplanes have done the dastardly deed. Or perhaps, at some moment of tension during a Congress, one side or the other will unexpectedly destroy the enemy's capital, and thus enable its diplomats to claim a "moral" victory. The possibilities are endless, but one thing is certain : both sides are clever and unscrupulous, and both are keenly alive to the importance of the first blow. Indeed many competent authorities on war consider that, if either side secures a genuine first blow, it will thereby win the war. The beginning, therefore, will certainly be sudden, and probably treacherous.

I have said that the next war is considered imminent by governments, and I have given the reasons

which may be presumed to have led them to that belief. But while war seems likely, I do not wish to suggest that it is certain. I can imagine many events that might prevent it. Hitler might die, or become so mad as to be certified, and his lieutenants might quarrel over the succession ; at the same time France might become involved in a desperate struggle between the Croix de Feu and the United Front. A discovery might be made which would enable the defence to sink attacking aeroplanes from the ground by electricity ; this would so alter strategy and the balance of power that everyone would need time to think it over. Dread of communism might lead the Western Powers to ally themselves with Hitler ; or, alternatively, Germany might weary of the Nazis. All these things are possible, but none of them is probable. If one confines oneself to the ordinary calculations of politics, the momentum of events certainly points to war in the very near future.

Until the last few years, this could not have been said so definitely. It was in the power of England and France, from the moment of the armistice until the advent of Hitler, to direct European development towards a genuine peace. French and British politicians, during that long period, were prevented from doing so by fear, conserva-

tism, greed, lack of imagination, and the recoil upon themselves of claptrap that they had used in winning elections. In the end, prolonged and odious injustice towards Germany produced its natural result. Now that it is too late, there are many who are willing to grant to Hitler what they refused to the Weimar Republic, thereby proving that they respect only force and providing the Nazis with their most potent argument. I do not mean that justice should be refused because it is demanded with threats of force ; justice should not be refused, however demanded. But the moral effect of yielding, which would have been admirable while German force was lacking, is quite different now, and is no longer capable of producing a peaceful atmosphere, since, if fear is supposed to be its motive, it encourages the habit of threatening and bullying. Like Macbeth, the victors in the War, while they had Germany at their mercy, taught

Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor.

And repentance now cannot undo the evil.

Are we then to accept fatalistically the conclusion that war is inevitable ? I do not take this view. War is not a convulsion of nature, like an earth-

CHAPTER TWO

The Nature of the Next War



CHANGES IN THE TECHNIQUE OF WAR HAVE HAD more influence upon the course of history than is supposed by those whose attention is mainly centred upon economic causation. There has been, since the beginning of organized fighting, an oscillation between superiority of the defensive and superiority of the offensive. Broadly speaking, when the defensive is strong civilization makes progress, and when the offensive is strong men revert towards barbarism. Another oscillation has been between the importance of mere numbers and the importance of skill and elaborate equipment. In the Middle Ages, the knight in armour was an expensive unit, and the world was aristocratic ; gunpowder abolished chivalry, and led by slow stages to citizen armies and democracy.

Since 1918, the attack has gained relatively to

the defence, and numbers have lost in importance as compared with skill and mechanization. It is these two technical facts which make the present outlook so gloomy. The first exposes ordinary citizens to grave risk of death in war, and the second makes it probable that such of them as survive will have to submit to the government of a military oligarchy.

Both these changes are due to the development of air warfare. So far as fighting on land is concerned, the defence is probably even more preponderant than it was on the Western front in the Great War. It is generally thought that the Germans will be unable, by any manoeuvres on land, to break through the line of fortifications on the eastern frontier of France. On the sea, if the air is left out of account, the same thing is true so far as navies are concerned ; it is probable that battleships will be even more inactive in the next war than in the last, and that each side will be able to defend its home waters from hostile fleets. Merchant shipping, it is true, as in 1914-18, will be subject to submarine attack, and the defence of ocean-borne trade will be difficult even apart from the danger of aeroplane attack ; but if submarines were the only menace the difficulty could be overcome. If aeroplanes were no more impor-

tant now than twenty years ago we might reasonably expect the next war to be even more slow and undramatic than the last.

The aeroplane, however, by the preponderance which it has given to the attack, has altered completely the strategy and even the politics of war. There are those, among the older Generals and Admirals, who refuse to admit this, and who cling desperately to traditional conceptions. Thus General E. Réquin says: "The general military character of a future war would largely resemble that which the war of 1914-18 assumed *in its last phase*."¹ And as regards the sea, the British Admiralty has apparently succeeded in persuading the Government that first-class battleships still have a decisive part to play. The bulk of expert opinion, however, takes a different view, and holds that, both on land and at sea, the aeroplane will have the initiative, and will make the traditional forms of warfare ineffective if not impossible. A few quotations will help to prove this point.

Major K. A. Bratt, who, being a Swede, was able to observe the Great War in an impartial spirit, and who, like many military men, is a sincere friend of peace, has given the reasons for

¹ *What would be the character of a new war?* Enquiry organized by the Inter-parliamentary Union, p. 15 (1931).

his expectations in an admirable book, *That Next War*, of which the English edition was published in 1930. He says :

“ What, then, is our thesis ?

“ It is that supremacy in the air will decide the issue of a European war, and that possession of such supremacy is the same thing as general military supremacy. At the present moment this is not altogether true.”

It will become true, he thinks, within ten years, that is, by 1940. He argues that a superior air force can hinder the concentration of troops, and can paralyse an army by bombing the roads and railways that bring its supplies and munitions. “ An army ”, he says, “ which is really inferior in the air is useless as an instrument of war, and the strategy which is based on it is abortive.” He adds that “ lost supremacy in the air may prevent the use of the naval forces in their essential functions.”

But will there necessarily be anything that can be called supremacy in the air ? May not the hostile air fleets operate independently of each other ? Major Bratt, in common with other authorities, recognizes that “ there is much to indicate that air strategy will in the first place contemplate direct attack on the large fixed objectives, especially the large centres of popula-

tion.” Nevertheless, unlike most authorities, he foresees a great air battle, at the very beginning of the war, in which one side will gain a complete victory and the other will suffer a complete defeat. If we could believe this, the prospect would be comparatively cheerful. A few hours or days of fighting between professionals would decide the issue in the air ; the beaten side would feel that further resistance could serve no purpose, and would make peace on the best terms obtainable. Such a war would do comparatively little material damage, and, though it might substitute dictatorship for democracy where the latter still survives, it would not destroy ordered society or introduce complete chaos.

But the aeroplane, immensely powerful in attack, is weak in defence. Suppose, for the sake of argument, a war between France and Germany. The French realize that the Germans will attack Paris by air, and of course they will wish to defend their capital if possible. But all the available evidence tends to show that the discovery of enemy aeroplanes on the way cannot be made quickly enough,¹ and that a belligerent who is prepared

¹ Thus Brigadier-General Groves says : “ This leads to another fundamental disadvantage of local air defence, namely, the difficulty of insuring that the defending fighters

to lose a considerable part of his force cannot be prevented from reaching his objective. It will, therefore, be more advantageous to the French to employ their air forces in inflicting damage on Berlin, or, more probably, on the industrial Rhineland, than to attempt to defend their own territory. If air battles do take place, it will be after, not before, the aeroplanes on either side have bombed each other's centres of population. This is the situation which Mr. Baldwin must have had in mind in his well-known confession that against air attack "the only defence is offence, which means that you have to kill women and children more quickly than the enemy if you want to save yourselves." The weight of technical authority is overwhelmingly in favour of this view, and I

shall be in a position to meet the raiders when they arrive. Again to take the case of London. Here, owing to the nearness of the sea and the high speed of some modern aeroplanes hostile bombers might be overhead fifteen minutes after crossing the coastline. In this short time the defence pilots would have to receive their orders, reach their machines, start and run up their engines, climb to a height of 15,000 or 20,000 feet, and reach the locality for which the raiders were reported to be making. Our latest interceptor fighters can climb to 20,000 feet in less than 10 minutes, but even so the time factor will be seen to favour the raiders."

A careful discussion by a German authority printed in the *Army, Navy, and Air Force Gazette* for September 3, 1936, reinforces this conclusion.

am afraid it must be accepted as much more likely to be correct than the view of Major Bratt.

We may take as one of the best expressions of the prevailing view of modern war Air-Commodore Charlton's *War from the Air* (1935), which is based on lectures given at Trinity College, Cambridge. On the pre-eminence of the aeroplane he is even more emphatic than Major Bratt: "It will be all air. It is doubtful, in the future, whether armies will be required to do more than act passively as human fencing material, with which to rail off one country from another, and prevent trespassing, while the bombing armadas wing their way above: both armies strictly on the defensive." But he makes short work of the air battle that Major Bratt expects, and his arguments appear irrefutable:

"Certain people still fondly retain the notion that war from the air can be a gentlemanly affair, confined to the air forces on opposing sides. Alternatively, there are some who gaily imagine that the obvious course is to seek out the hostile bombers on their aerodromes, before they leave the ground, and blow them sky-high; cutting off the danger at its source, as water is turned off at the main to counteract the danger of a burst pipe.

"Why should either belligerent spend time and

energy on the problematical destruction of a series of difficult objectives such as aerodromes, when a hundred and fifty square miles of teeming city lies below or an endless expanse of furnace, mill, and tool-shop, with mile upon mile of northern roof lights? Aerodromes are not considerable targets in this sense, and they may not be very vulnerable when found. The aircraft which ought to be blown sky-high may be abroad or locally scattered. They, and everything else for service and maintenance, may be housed underground, safe against destruction.

“Most excellent it would be if the game of war could be played that way, confined entirely to the opposing air forces ; with the strong likelihood of that side suing for peace whose aircraft manufacturing capacity could no longer keep pace with the demand for replenishments. Then, with the armies and navies keeping the lists while the jousts went on above, battle would become again a polite affair, and the small and big men of commerce would go safely about their business, aware only through taxation that their country was at war, as when mediæval England fought in Europe.

“But let the dream pass ! It will not be like that on the next occasion, nor will the game be

played according to 'Cocker'. The capital of a country, and its centres of industry, iron and steel for choice, will be the scenes of the one-sided conflict, of the bombing offensive."

Commodore Charlton has no belief in the power of navies to withstand attack from the air. As British Air Attaché to the United States, he was a spectator, in 1921, of an important experiment in this connection. As part of the spoils of war, two German vessels, the battleship *Ostfriedland* and the cruiser *Frankfurt*, had come into the possession of the American Government, which decided to sink them. The champions of the air maintained that they could be sunk from above by bombers; the admirals maintained the contrary. "Eye-witnesses", says Commodore Charlton, "will never be able to forget the dramatic intensity of those moments in which these two great vessels were observed, beyond all doubt, to have received their death wounds; to be slowly settling in the water; and finally, to be sinking. Even the triumphant Air Service element amongst the on-lookers were awed to silence, and the expression of blank incredulity on the faces of the senior sea-going officers of the American navy took time to efface. When it was realized, in due course, that it was not the hits but the near misses which had

done the damage, causing the seams to gape under water, surprise gave place to amazement."

He adds that the *Ostfriedland* "was believed to be unsinkable, and, indeed, she had made harbour after Jutland in spite of having struck two mines and been repeatedly hit by shell. Yet here she was at the bottom of the sea, sent there by missiles from aircraft which had not even touched her." Later experiments, he tells us, have all pointed the same moral.

The effect of this discovery upon British policy has been curious. It has not led to a discontinuance of battleship construction ; on the contrary, we are still spending far more on naval building than on new aeroplanes. A battleship, after all, has its uses : it gives work to the unemployed, profits to a number of capitalists, pleasure to admirals, and pain only to taxpayers. But the Government is evidently aware that it can no longer be considered an engine of war, for only so can the yielding to Italy on the Abyssinian question be explained. Devotees of the League clamoured for the closing of the Suez Canal, but the Cabinet, in view of the strength of the Italian Air Force, apparently doubted whether the British Navy was equal to the task. This supposition, at any rate, makes the course of British policy intelligible.

In the *Army, Navy and Air Force Gazette* for August 13, 1936, Mr. Norman Walton goes so far as to suggest that England should abandon the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. "These long narrow seas and the Suez Canal are very difficult and expensive to hold. . . . With the improvements in aerial communications and the increased speed of ocean travel, there is a question whether it would not pay us to hold Aden and Gibraltar to bottle up the seas, trade Malta and Cyprus for considerations elsewhere, set Palestine and Egypt on their own feet, the latter renouncing her claims on the Sudan in our favour. The time may not have come yet to do this, but the matter deserves consideration."

Brigadier-General Groves takes the same view : "There are only two nations bordering the Mediterranean which possess considerable air forces, namely France and Italy. Each could by a ruthless use of these forces sever our main artery of communications with the East in that narrow sea. Each could sink our merchant shipping, which would necessarily pass within close aircraft range of their territories. And each could, in my opinion, render Malta useless as a naval base."

Our Admiralty and our Government cannot bring themselves to admit that the days when

naval power was supreme are past, but this is obvious to every impartial student of modern war. Thus Señor Madariaga says :

“ England as a whole still believes in the supremacy of the British Navy as the panacea for all her international ills. That it has been a panacea for about three centuries no one can deny. That it played its last scene in this magnificent role during the Great War no one can deny. But that it *was* the *last* scene is apparent to every one outside England and to those clear-sighted Englishmen who do not allow the glow of the past to interfere with the light of the present.”

The war from the air will be of a peculiar kind. According to Commodore Charlton, “ The next war, owing to lack of any effective reply to air attack which can be at present foreseen, is bound to develop on lines of reciprocity, the actual combatants being misnamed as such, for theirs will be mainly the mechanical employment of using enemy cities as bomb dumps. It will partake rather of the nature of an eliminating race, somewhat on the lines suggested by the late Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson, who was of opinion that if two opposed armies went on killing each other *ad libitum*, the side on which there were some survivors would naturally be victorious.”

We may take it as agreed by the almost unanimous opinion of experts that the main business of the opposing air forces will be, not to fight each other, but to bomb the centres of population and industry. The war will be directed primarily against civilians. As General Groves says in his valuable book, *Behind the Smoke Screen*, "the aim of each belligerent will be to bring such pressure to bear upon the enemy people as to force them to oblige their Government to sue for peace." What means will be available to this end?

The German air raids on England during the Great War were more effective than is generally realized. True, the casualties were few : in 1915-16, in Zeppelin raids, they were 500 killed and 1234 wounded. But as a result of stoppage of work the output of munitions was diminished by one-sixth,¹ and a considerable effect of demoralization was produced on the civilian population. "For several weeks many of the London Underground stations were packed nightly to suffocation. It was estimated at the time that some 300,000 people descended to these shelters every night, and that at least half a million more slept in cellars. . . . Hull, after Mathey's attack (carried out by only one Zeppelin) was half emptied nightly of its

¹ Groves, pp. 117-18.

poor, who, after two more scares, refused to stay in the defenceless town and sought refuge in the fields as far away as possible. At Hythe, after the raid on May 25th, 1917, a mob invaded a local aerodrome, stoned the mechanics and attempted to wreck the hangars, because the Royal Air Force unit had not protected the town. On the 12th of February (1916) a representative of the Ministry of Munitions stated : ‘ Our position is that workmen are refusing to work at night unless guaranteed that warning will be given in sufficient time to enable them to disperse.’ ”¹ And so on.

As for the future, Sir Samuel Hoare stated in the House of Commons :

“ Whereas in the late war three hundred tons of bombs were dropped in this country by the Germans, air forces to-day could drop almost the same weight in the first twenty-four hours and continue this scale of attack indefinitely.”

Moreover, in the Great War aeroplanes carried only high explosive bombs, whereas now they can carry three types of bombs, all of which will probably be employed. There are high explosive bombs, incendiary bombs, and gas bombs, each of which will have its own part to play. High explosive bombs will be used for destroying important

¹ Ib., pp. 155-6.

structures, such as bridges, railway stations, and, above all, power stations. In the late war, as we have seen, when air raids became frequent, large numbers of nervous people took refuge in the Underground ; but if the power station could be destroyed, the Underground would suddenly become pitch dark and unventilated, and if crowds had sought shelter there, they would die of suffocation. Many streets will become impassable, both from the débris of fallen houses and from holes caused by bombs.

Meanwhile incendiary bombs will be starting vast conflagrations. Thermite, which they will probably contain, is capable of generating a temperature of 5000° centigrade ; it will cause rivers of molten steel, and water will be powerless to extinguish the fires produced by it. In all likelihood the gas mains will be burst and great jets of burning gas will shoot up. Fire brigades will be quite incapable of coping with the situation, the more so as the streets, in many places, will be blocked.

But undoubtedly the most formidable of the three kinds of bomb will be the one filled with gas. We will not suppose that any government knows of some new and more deadly kind of gas ; we will suppose only such gases to be employed as are already generally known to be suitable.

Take, for example, mustard gas, which was used in the Great War. This has the advantage of poisoning the ground, which remains dangerous for days. At first, it produces no noticeable effects, but within a few hours symptoms appear. If the exposure has been slight, the patient usually recovers ; if severe, after some days of intolerable agony the patient dies—if he is fortunate. But men who were exposed to mustard gas in 1917 or 1918 are still living, blind, ill, and suffering from a variety of terrible diseases resulting from the effect of the gas upon the tissues. Lewisite, which was invented shortly before the end of the Great War, is even more effective than mustard gas. Both produce burns if they come in contact with the skin, but Lewisite poisons the burns by means of the arsenic which is one of its constituents, and thus prevents the large proportion of recoveries which was the defect in mustard gas ; no protection against it is adequate, therefore, unless the whole of the skin is covered. It is so poisonous that fifty bombers, given perfect conditions, could carry enough of it to poison all London and its suburbs. Fortunately perfect conditions are extremely improbable ; but even so it is to be expected that the loss of life caused by gas bombs in crowded areas will be very great.

What means of defence exist against air raids? Defending aeroplanes cannot do much, because the time after the first warning is received is too short. Anti-aircraft guns can perhaps compel aeroplanes to keep so high that they cannot aim at any particular building, however large; but in the case of an area as large as London this is only a very partial protection. And even this is very doubtful. Searchlights have the greatest difficulty in locating aeroplanes, and when they have been located their rapid flight makes them very difficult to hit. As the Home Office Circular on Air Raid Precautions (July 9, 1935) states:

“Developments in the air have made it possible for air attacks on a large scale to be delivered, and delivered suddenly, on many parts of this country; and despite the steps which the Government are taking to increase the Air Force for home defence and the ground anti-aircraft defences, it is impossible to guarantee immunity from attack. The increasing speed of aircraft makes the task of the defence progressively more difficult, and their greater weight-carrying capacity adds to the damage which can be effected by even a single aircraft which eludes the defenders.”

This statement—which is obviously designed to be as little alarmist as possible—is an introduction

to the consideration of measures which civilians may take for their own protection, or which may be taken by the authorities to this end. We are first told that "the construction on any extensive scale of shelters which would be proof against direct hits by bombs is impracticable. . . . Apart from any other considerations the cost would be prohibitive." But "effective protection against blast and splinters from bombs can be obtained at comparatively small cost." This is consoling ; but what percentage of the population of London or any other large city have had such protection provided ? Yet it is admitted that the next war will begin suddenly, after very brief warning in the shape of strained diplomatic relations, and that it will begin with air raids. It will be too late then to set about securing this "effective protection."

"Protection against gas", says the same Circular, "will need separate treatment. Information will be published as to the means by which occupiers of premises can make them gas-proof." Again we must ask : what proportion of the population have acquired this information, and what proportion are in a position to take the measures which it recommends ? The only suggestions that I know of are based upon the report (to the Red Cross) of the International Committee of Experts

for the Protection of the Civilian Population against Chemical Warfare (Rome, 1929). It is proposed that, on warning of an air raid being given, the whole population, except those engaged in essential services, shall descend into cellars provided with ventilators supplied with gas filters. Those whose cellars are not so provided will have to close up every crack through which air can enter, and will be in danger of asphyxiation. If there is any glass, it is likely to be shattered by the explosion of bombs in the neighbourhood, with the result that the poison gas will pour in. It is evident that the cellars, if they are to serve their purpose, must not be ordinary cellars. It would be optimistic to suppose that one per cent of the population of London could find such refuges if war were to break out within the next twelve months. The Committee of Experts, in fact, recognized, in their Report to the International Red Cross, the hopelessness of the problem, and summed up :

“ The Committee is also of the opinion that, provided the progress in the technical development of explosives and chemicals renders future attacks in which they are employed considerably more effective than in the last war and exceeds the development in means of protection, the fatal moment must arrive in which the question of

defence, already extremely difficult in view of the means already available, becomes an insoluble problem. A large proportion of the inhabitants of populated towns may be doomed to destruction.”

This was written in 1929 ; since that date, there is every reason to believe that the conditions for the gloomy conclusion have been fulfilled.

Gas masks and protective clothing—so the first Home Office Circular told us—are to be supplied to the essential services, firemen, policemen, etc., but not to the general population, though subsequent announcements have modified this. Nor is there any certainty that gas masks and gas filters will prove effective, since the enemy will naturally seek to employ some gas against which those that have been provided are useless. In any case, sneezing gas can penetrate any mask and compel the wearer to take it off ; and fitting masks on to young children is hardly possible, so that the most innocent and helpless part of the population will be unprotected.

Official pronouncements, of course, make the best of the situation, because they must, at all costs, deter the population from insisting that war shall not take place. Air-Commodore Charlton is admirably frank on the subject :

“ On land there are certain forms of defence, both passive and active, which, even though they

may not do much else, will help to sustain the mass *moral*, and postpone the moment when the population will clamour for peace at any price. There is the provision of refuges ; the issue of protective coverings ; and, possibly, the planned evacuation of cities ; there is also the creation of an iron-bound censorship, which will disguise disasters and prevent dire news spreading ; there is, furthermore, propaganda on the home front, the converse of the last."

This author devotes a chapter to " Air-Bombing of a Capital ", in which, after the reassuring statement that it is untrue to suppose that in London " not a great percentage of the population will live to see another day ", he adds : " But that is all the comfort that citizens can take to themselves, and the stark reality is almost as bad." Railway yards, docks, and market centres will be " drenched with gas " ; high explosives will be used to destroy bridges, wharves, and power stations ; the thermite bomb " can be scattered over the city at large," causing, very likely, a conflagration equal to the Great Fire of 1666, which completely destroyed the City.

There is nothing peculiar in this forecast. Thus Major Nye says :

" The probable tactics of a future enemy will be the bombardment of London with high explo-

sive bombs so as to drive the populace into underground shelters. This will be followed by a gas attack, in which the gas cloud will be heavier than air and will make it impossible to remain in the cellars. It would seem unthinkable to supply seven million persons with gas masks."

Major-General Fuller, who takes the unusual view that the enemy, out of humanity, will employ gases that disable but do not usually kill, gives the following picture of what is to be expected :

"I believe that in future warfare great cities, such as London, will be attacked from the air—and that a fleet of 500 aeroplanes, each carrying 500 ten-pound bombs of let us suppose mustard gas, might cause 200,000 minor casualties and throw the whole city into panic within half an hour of their arrival. Picture, if you can, what the result will be : London for several days will be one vast raving Bedlam, the hospitals will be stormed, traffic will cease, the homeless will shriek for help, the city will be a pandemonium. What of the Government at Westminster? It will be swept away by an avalanche of terror. Then will the enemy dictate his terms, which will be grasped at like a straw by a drowning man. Thus may a war be won in forty-eight hours and the losses of the winning side may be actually nil !"

Most writers, however, consider that the above is an under-statement, and that the reality will be worse. Thus Brigadier-General Groves, after quoting this passage, comments :

“ While agreeing with Fuller that non-lethal gases, or non-lethal concentrations of toxic gases, might suffice to produce such results, and consequently that chemical warfare could prove as comparatively humane in any future struggle as it was in the last, there is reason to believe that this would not be so. For his view implies that belligerents can be guided by logic and common sense, and discounts the hate and fear which in war time soon affect the contending peoples with a sort of mass-homicidal mania.”

The vision of London as merely “ one vast raving Bedlam ” is therefore to be dismissed as the optimistic day-dream of a visionary who supposes belligerents to be “ guided by logic and common sense.”

Two coldly scientific statements by German authorities are worth quoting. A German manual, *The Chemical War*, by two eminent gas specialists, says : “ The next war will be an affair of widespread gas attacks by aircraft squadrons and gas-carrying tanks. The civil population will come in for scant consideration, although the possibility of

providing them with gas masks and protective armour is discussed." General von Altrock is more explicit :

" In wars of the future the initial hostile attack will be directed against the great nerve and communication centres of the enemy's territory, against its large cities, factory centres, munition areas, water, gas, and light supplies ; in fact against every life artery of the country. Discharge of poison gases will become the rule since great progress has been made in the production of poison gases. Such attacks will be carried out to great depths in the rear of the actual fighting troops. Entire regions inhabited by peaceful populations will be continually threatened with extinction. *The war will frequently have the appearance of a destruction en masse of the entire civil population rather than a combat of armed men* " (my italics).

The view of the professional soldier, if we may judge by the *Army, Navy and Air Force Gazette*, is that the Home Office, being composed of civilians, is unintentionally misleading the population on the subject of gas defence. An editorial on July 23, 1936, states :

" There can be no doubt that the present situation of our gas defences is highly unsatisfactory. Adverse comment from many quarters confirms in

general the views put forward in our columns. A disquieting feature of the present state of affairs is the absence of critical and informed opinion. With few exceptions, the kind of articles appearing in our newspapers to-day—obviously emanating from official quarters—appear to suggest that it is quite easy to protect people by individual methods . . . and that our civil respirators are ‘perfect,’ which, if it means anything, can only mean that they will give 100 per cent protection to everyone. This light-hearted dismissal of a serious problem suggests that the charge of unreality brought against our present anti-gas measures is only too true. . . . As for ‘perfect’ respirators, have we already forgotten the lessons of 1914–18, when troops highly disciplined, highly trained in gas, provided with equally ‘perfect’ respirators, managed to incur some hundreds of thousands of casualties? . . . The truth is that the charge of unreality and absence of military standpoint is patent and obvious to everyone who has had practical experience of what it means to come up against the gas weapon.”

The same journal returns to the subject on September 3, 1936, in its “Weekly Notes,” in which it says :

The gas defence problem is admittedly one of great complexity and difficulty, but our present attitude towards it, in all its aspects, is one which increases the seriousness of the

menace. Service arrangements are backward, in some respects obsolete, and in all respects inadequate. Civil preparation is equally disquieting ; after nearly twenty years of inaction we are launching a defence system of the civil population which will not stand intelligent examination. Many distinguished scientific men, and not a few experienced soldiers with considerable chemical war knowledge, feel that the teaching of civil instructors is thoroughly bad, both in respect of what is said and of what is not said, that there is a general inability to picture chemical warfare with accuracy or even with clarity, and that present teaching is sowing a harvest of tares which will not only be profitless but difficult to eradicate.

On general grounds the policy errs in that it ignores a well proven principle of defence. It shows us to be in the hands of men who, possibly very humanly, wish to buy their own experience whatever the price we may have to pay. Such an attitude is forgivable and often admirable in cases which affect the individual, but should not be tolerated in those responsible for the guidance of a nation. The principle to which I refer has come inviolate through all the ages, but I shall quote it as it was enunciated by one who owed his success so largely to its observance, Frederick the Great :

“ A defensive war is apt to betray us into too frequent detachments. Those generals who have had but little experience attempt to protect every point, while those who are better acquainted with their profession, having only the capital object in view, guard against a decisive blow and acquiesce in smaller misfortunes to avoid greater.”

To endeavour to teach over forty million men, women and children how to protect themselves against every possible form of aerial gas attack is not merely doomed to failure but is both unnecessary and unwise. To dissipate monies in pursuance of this policy is to divert them from effective measures. To concentrate on what is vital should be the guiding policy at the moment.

It is not always easy to discover what may be omitted, but the present policy shows that this has not even been considered, since it is concentrating on what should first be eliminated. What use, for instance, would hundreds of thousands of gas masks be to people who cannot detect the presence of gas or discover a contaminated area, and of what use would a decontaminating plan be if such areas cannot be located? Who is going to say where they are? Aircraft are capable of spraying areas silently, without discovery, and they themselves will only know very vaguely which areas have been contaminated. So far as London is concerned it would be better to devote every penny available for defence on the creation of roads along which London can evacuate itself, on the protection of food supplies (which will get inside gas masks and undo their protection), on the provision of underground shelters—which might coincide with roads if the necessary conveniences were added, and on such measures of which many more will occur to the reader.

As for the possibility of protecting the civilian population by means of masks, Major Lefebure, one of the most eminent British authorities on gas, says :

“ Can each individual or a substantial percentage, be given mask protection? The idea is farcical. A nation might produce sufficient masks, but what hope has it to train from twenty to fifty million people in the efficient use of the mask? Anyone really aware of the measures which had to be taken to train disciplined soldiers to meet this menace can have no doubt on the point. You cannot hope to train the women, the children, the

old and infirm ; your maximum hope is a relatively small percentage of the fit and disciplined.

“ But if the population could be trained, what hope have you to find it protected and using its mask before a sudden attack ? Calculate the number of people in a great city who would be within reach of masks in such circumstances. Get statistics of the displacement of people from their homes at any time. The idea of substantial mask protection then becomes farcical.”¹

As for the attempt to make cellars gas proof, Dr. G. Woker² points out that “ the attempt to make underground refuges impervious to gas will be nullified by the mechanical effects of the high explosive, which will burst the walls and roofs, and the effect of the incendiary bombs.”

We can now form a picture of an air raid from the standpoint of the ordinary civilian. But we must remember that it is likely to be the very first act of war, not preceded by any declaration of war, but made unexpectedly at some moment of diplomatic tension ; the preparations which the Government has in mind will therefore have been only very partially carried out.

¹ *Common Sense about Disarmament*, p. 122.

² *What would be the Character of a New War ?* p. 376. Dr. Woker is the head of the Institute of Physico-Chemical Biology at the University of Bern.

Even assuming that civilians have undergone gas drill and have all been provided with gas masks (except young children, who cannot be taught to use them), an air raid will inevitably cause immense numbers of casualties—some through explosive bombs, more through fires, and probably, in spite of masks, still more through gas. But it is likely that the worst results will be due to panic. In 1917, when no gas or incendiary bombs were used, and when the carrying capacity of aeroplanes, as well as their number, was very much less than now, there were times (as we have seen) when large parts of the population of London were terror-stricken. A bombardment from the air will be a far more appalling experience in the next war than it was in 1917. To quote *War from the Air* once more :

“What of the people? From the very first their minds will be reactive to rumour, exaggeration, and all the other means of fostering panic. . . . There will be undisciplined flight from London, disintegrating to the public transport facilities, and dislocating to the food supply. . . . Large sections of this self-evacuated population will soon be existing in a state of semi-starvation, and lawlessness will add its quota to the upheaval. Of those who remain, either by choice or constraint, some will

have their sanity strained to the limit. Others will cower in the assigned shelters. . . . What is the use of elaborating at great expense methods of passive protection for the populace in the shape of masks, safety suits, and bomb, gas, and fireproof shelters, when the material and economic destruction is going to get them anyhow? "

It must be evident that the economic life of the community, and the manufacture of munitions of war, will be impossible in such conditions. Owing to destruction on roads and railways, it will be impossible to distribute food, and many will starve. In such circumstances only an iron military despotism can prevent a degree of anarchy which would be utterly disastrous.

It may be assumed that disciplined forces, which have active duties to perform during air raids, will not share the demoralization of those who are expected to be merely passive. The army, the police, the firemen, the medical men and the nurses, will, no doubt, do everything possible, even if there are many casualties among them. But they will find it almost impossible to do anything effective. The supply system will be disorganized by the enemy first, and then by the civilian panic. Oil fuel will be set ablaze by incendiary bombs, thus reducing the air force to impotence and making

motor transport impossible. Furious mobs may attempt to lynch Cabinet Ministers. The only remaining centre of order will be the armed forces, now impotent against the enemy, but still powerful against starving civilians. It will rest with them to make peace, and to inaugurate a new system of government.

In all this, I am not thinking only of Great Britain ; the same sort of thing is likely to occur in all the densely populated countries of Western Europe. The American Continent, North and South, is safe for the present ; the U.S.S.R., owing to its vast extent and sparse population, cannot suffer complete disaster through air raids ; Spain and Portugal are likely to escape owing to their geographical position. But the sort of thing that I have been describing is to be expected in London, Paris, Berlin, and Milan, as well as in all the most important industrial districts of Western Europe. There is, however, another possibility. It may be that, at the critical moment, one side will attack sooner than the other ; in that case, it must infallibly win a complete victory. Each side knows this ; therefore the next war is certain to be sudden.

If the war does not come very soon, it is probable that governments will take steps to prevent civilian panic, as they are already doing to some extent,

especially in Japan. They may persuade most people that adequate methods of protection exist, and may use force to prevent escape from shelters during air raids. They will, no doubt, move as much of the population as possible from the capital to remote country districts. They will prevent all news of disasters from being printed. They will be compelled to establish an iron tyranny, and to give orders to troops to shoot down all disorderly mobs. If all this is not done at once by the civil government, it will be done within a few days by the military authorities ; and it will all be clearly necessary if disastrous anarchy is to be avoided. A war in defence of democracy would necessarily begin with a military despotism, and there is no reason to doubt that it would end with one.

The consequences to Europe of such warfare against civilians are impossible to estimate. A French authority, Professor André Meyer, at the end of a long discussion of the subject, says :

“ The effect of a siege [to which he likens modern war] has always been great destruction and sometimes the total wiping out of a city. When all the vital organs of the city were localised in one single agglomeration this might bring about the end of an entire civilization so that it has remained no more than a name in history. It is true that one

may argue that what is new about our civilisation is not contained in a single town but spread over a territory and would be saved even if a city disappeared. Nevertheless, it is not certain that political, juridical, and social institutions, a certain form of life, a certain sense given to human activities would survive the disappearance of great capitals, of laboratories, of libraries, of the art treasures of the past, or even of the power stations and the means of communication. The recruiting of the élites, their education, their organisation, might become impossible.

“It cannot be doubted that even European civilisation is a fragile thing. It might disappear. It is important that the men and women of Europe should know this. They hold in their hands now, and will hold tomorrow, means of destruction sufficient to shake and perhaps to destroy it.”

For the moment this is perhaps too dark a picture. If a war occurs during the next few years, it will not destroy civilization in America, and from America a civilized way of life will presumably return, in time, to Europe. Twenty or thirty years hence the technique of war may have made sufficient progress to put an end to American immunity and the partial immunity of the U.S.S.R., but as yet that point has not been reached.

In England, France, Germany, and Italy, unless one side is immediately victorious, we may expect a loss of life to which there has been nothing comparable since the Thirty Years' War, which is said to have halved the population of Germany. This will inevitably be accompanied by the virtual destruction of all social bonds except military discipline, which alone will have the strength to stand against panic. The peace will be concluded between oligarchies of soldiers, sailors and airmen, who will form the government everywhere. There is, it is true, another possibility. The course of the war may lead, in one country or in several, to mutinies, in which case the anarchy is likely to be prolonged long after the end of the international war ; but even in that case, though by an even more painful process, a military government must be the ultimate outcome, either through foreign conquest or through the effort to prevent it. If this forecast is correct, a desire for war on the part of Hitler or Mussolini is logical, since, even if they themselves perish, the kind of social organization that they admire is likely to spread throughout Europe. But for those who dislike their outlook it is useless to regard war as a means of defeating it.

CHAPTER THREE

Isolationism



IN VIEW OF THE APPALLING DESTRUCTION, NOT only of life and property, but of civilized traditions and social institutions, to be expected in the next war, all parties in Great Britain are agreed that peace is to be preserved if possible. Differences, however, arise on two points : first, as to the best policy for preventing war ; and second, as to the objects for which it is still worth while to fight. Some think that we ought to fight in defence of the territory of the British Empire, but for no other purpose whatever. Others consider that the only justifiable war is a League of Nations war. A third group considers that some principle—democracy, communism, or fascism—is of such immense international importance that it would be ignoble not to fight for it. A fourth group considers that the way to preserve peace is to form

strong alliances of peace-loving powers, even if these are not camouflaged as the League of Nations. A fifth group—which apparently includes the Government—relies upon a policy of expedients, and hopes, by diplomatic finesse, to stave off each successive crisis until the general situation grows less tense. Finally there are those who think that a modern war between civilized States can never be worth while, since, whatever the question at stake and whatever the issue, the war is likely to do more harm than would be done by even the worst peaceable decision.

I propose to consider each of these policies in succession, not in a spirit of controversy, but in a serious endeavour to arrive at a reasonable conclusion. I shall assume that a war is justifiable if it promotes happiness or civilization, but not otherwise ; it is to be judged, that is to say, by its outcome, not by any legalistic test, nor by what is called “honour”, nor yet by any sweeping condemnation of all war as such. There have been wars that have done good—for example, the American War of Independence, and, to take a case where no legal pretext existed, Cæsar’s conquest of Gaul. Our question is, therefore : Can we imagine any great modern war which would do more good than harm ?

“ Isolationism ” is the doctrine that Great Britain ought to fight in defence of the British Empire, but not for any other reason. Put more generally, it maintains that every State is justified in defending its own territory, but not in engaging in war for any other cause.

As a general theory, this view is obviously untenable. If a large and powerful State is surrounded by a number of small countries, and each of them adopts the isolationist position, it is obvious that each can easily be conquered separately, whereas in combination they might have preserved their independence. There can be no justification for self-defence which is not also a justification of defence of another who is unwarrantably attacked. All this is obvious, and no one would deny it in its general form.

But when it comes to particular cases, isolationism may become more or less defensible. In the United States, the doctrine has been passionately held ever since the time of Washington, and it cannot be denied that it has served the national interests well. When Wilson tried to get his country to abandon this policy in favour of the Covenant of the League, he failed ; and ever since there has been a strong determination to keep out of European quarrels if possible. Indeed, the most drastic legis-

lation limiting trade with belligerents has been passed with a view to facilitating the preservation of neutrality. It is true that grave doubts exist among well-informed Americans as to whether this legislation will succeed in its object, but at any rate the wish for its success is overwhelmingly strong, and makes pacts with European Powers politically impossible.

Apart from the War of Independence, the United States has only twice been involved in a European war, and each time through insisting upon the rights of neutrals on the sea. While not renouncing these rights, Americans, it seems, prefer not exercising them to being dragged into war in defence of them. No doubt, from the point of view of the national interest, they are right in this. The treaty of Ghent, which concluded the war of 1812, settled nothing ; the victory of America and the Allies in the Great War did not secure "the freedom of the seas." Obviously in both cases neutrality would have been more advantageous.

The policy of isolationism is possible for the United States owing to two factors : great strength, and geographical remoteness from other Great Powers. There has never been any motive for a wide coalition against America, and nothing less would offer any chance of success. National

interests are mainly in the Western hemisphere, where they are safeguarded by the Monroe Doctrine. Far Eastern questions may, before very long, bring about a change in this respect, since allies may be needed in defending American interests against Japan. But it may well be questioned whether these interests are of sufficient importance to be worth a serious war, and as yet there is no evidence that America so considers them. The defence of American territory is not difficult, and accessions of territory are not needed. At present, therefore, the United States can stand alone, and avoid "entangling alliances"; and this can be done without any departure from the traditional maxims of statecraft.

There was a period when England was in the same position, namely, from 1815 to the end of the Boer War in 1902. Throughout that period, the British Navy made invasion impossible, even for a coalition of all the other Great Powers; and even against such a coalition, it would have been possible to defend almost all parts of the Empire. Until 1815, we had needed allies, first against Spain, and then against France; after 1902, we needed allies, or at least friends, against the menace of the Germany Navy.

After 1918, it is true, we had no longer the

German navy to fear. But now, owing to the possibility of air invasion, we are not protected by our navy, and are even more vulnerable than France or Germany, because of the density of our population and our dependence upon sea-borne food. In a single combat with either France or Germany, we can hardly hope for victory. Our immense Empire is a temptation to any predatory Power, and can no longer be successfully defended except with the help of allies. If, then, it is taken for granted—as is done by isolationists—that we must defend our Empire, it follows that we must seek the co-operation of some other Power or Powers. Since we cannot hope to secure this for nothing, we must undertake reciprocal obligations: not only will they defend us, but we shall defend them. The defence of our Empire, therefore, involves commitments on the Continent, and these must be such that some one or more Great Powers will not wish to see us defeated in war. Isolationism, when combined with imperialism, is illogical, since it supposes that we still possess that immunity and that preponderance that we enjoyed in the nineteenth century. If we are not to bind ourselves, in certain contingencies, to take part in Continental quarrels, we must be content to lose our Empire, with the important exception of the self-governing

Dominions. I do not mean that we must lose it at once, but that sooner or later, an irresistible combination of Powers will tell us that we own more than our share of the earth's surface, and that it is time we submitted to a more just distribution. Those who are unwilling to yield to such demands, and yet insist that we must remain neutral in the affairs of the Continent, are blind to the distribution of power in the modern world ; they are Rip van Winkles, dreaming that we are still living in the comfortable days of Queen Victoria.

Moreover, from the standpoint of ordinary power politics, many places not in the British Empire are more important to us than a number of our own possessions. Belgium, for example, matters more to us than the Falkland Islands or British Guiana. Ceuta, in Spanish Morocco, was coveted by the French ; but even when, in 1905 and 1911, we were willing to go to war with Germany to defend the claim of France to the greater part of Morocco, we insisted upon the retention of Ceuta by Spain, because its possession by a first-class Power would make Gibraltar valueless. It is said that the Spanish rebels have promised Ceuta to Mussolini if they win ; if so, our Government cannot wish for their success. No Great Power, and England

least of all, can afford to disregard events in foreign territory if it is to play the imperialist game successfully.

Morally, there is nothing to be said for the view that we should fight to retain possession of regions which we acquired and retain by force—India, for instance—while we should not lift a finger in even the most righteous cause in which no part of our Empire is involved. The Spanish rebels, for example, are a brutal military oligarchy, supported by savage Moorish and foreign mercenaries, attempting to suppress by force a legally elected government. This, according to current maxims, gives us no ground for opposing them ; but when, by accident, they land a bomb on the golf course at Gibraltar, we have a just grievance. I do not mean that we ought, on idealistic grounds, to intervene in Spain ; but I do mean that these grounds, even if not adequate, are a thousand times stronger than any violation of territory which is ours by right of conquest.

Isolationism combined with imperialism is ignorant and stupid ; divorced from imperialism, it is much more defensible. It may be urged, truly, as I think, that a reason against imperialism is its need for Continental alliances. Sir Edward Grey, in July 1914, remarked that “ to be dragged into

a war for Serbia would be detestable ” ; nevertheless we were dragged into it, because Serbia was allied with Russia, Russia with France, and France with England. When we concluded the Entente Cordiale with the French in 1904, they recognized our position in Egypt and we recognized theirs in Morocco. This twice brought us to the verge of war with Germany in defence of French Imperialism ; and on the second of these occasions, in 1911, it was not our moderation, but that of Germany, that brought the crisis to an end. Every Great Power commits crimes, and an alliance compels us to support the crimes of others as well as our own. Moreover every alliance, while it may, for a time, prevent the outbreak of war, makes the extent of war greater when it does come. If Serbia had not been allied with Russia, Austria and Serbia could have settled their quarrel in a week. If Austria had not been allied with Germany, Russia and Serbia could have settled with Austria in a month. If Russia had not been allied with France, or France with England, Germany and Austria could have defeated Russia in half a year. But owing to the system of alliances, all Europe, almost, had to fight for over four years. These are reasons for isolation, but they are reasons derived from humanity and the progress of civilization, not from

considerations of purely national interests. And if they are valid, they take us, as we shall see in later chapters, to a very much more extreme position than any that could possibly be described as isolationism.

Collective Security



“ COLLECTIVE SECURITY ” IS, AT PRESENT IN GREAT Britain, the favourite method of preventing war. It is professed ardently by the Labour Party, with somewhat less ardour by a majority of Conservatives, and with varying degrees of conviction by most of the writers on war and its evils. Communists, since Russia joined the League, are as ardent as anybody in its favour ; indeed, on this question, there is a “ united front ” from them to the Bench of Bishops. In spite of this formidable body of opinion, I cannot persuade myself that, in the present state of the world, what is practicable in the way of “ collective security ” offers much hope of peace. But before embarking on criticism, I wish to say that I believe the ultimate cure for war will be found through a development of the idea which led to the creation of the League of

Nations. At the end of this chapter I shall consider what conditions a League would have to fulfil in order to achieve the objects which its advocates have hoped that the existing League would fulfil. But for the moment I am concerned with the inadequacy of the League as it is, not with the possible merits of some future League with a different constitution.

When President Wilson created the League of Nations, he had a definite theory in mind. Each State, while preserving its sovereignty intact, was to bind itself, by the Covenant, to come to the assistance of any other State which was the victim of aggression. In this way, aggression would automatically become unprofitable, and wars would therefore cease. Often the aggressor could be defeated by economic sanctions alone, but if necessary military sanctions also would be employed, and obviously with success, since (according to the theory) they would be employed by the whole world against only one Power.

There was nothing new in all this from a theoretical point of view. My father Lord Amberley advocated almost exactly Wilson's League, with the whole apparatus of economic and military sanctions, in an essay written in 1871 and published by John Morley in the *Fortnightly Review*.

Seeley the historian produced a similar scheme, though for Europe only, at the same time, the stimulus in each case being the Franco-Prussian War. In England, first Disraeli and then Joseph Chamberlain subsequently led the majority to neglect such ideas in favour of the glory of conquest. We should not have liked a league against aggression during the Afghan war, the Zulu war, the war in the Sudan, or, above all, the Boer War, which nearly brought about an alliance of France, Germany and Russia in defence of the Boers. Indeed the fright we got at that time was one of the reasons for our ententes with France and Russia : we found that the imperialist game was becoming risky unless we had accomplices. We therefore lent money to the Tsar to enable him to do without the Duma, and our Government did everything in its power to conceal our support of his policy of frightfulness in Persia.

But when the Great War came, many people could not be content without some moral camouflage. The phrase "a war to end war" caught on, and seems to have impressed President Wilson, who was too high-minded to regard Pierpont Morgan's solvency as the main purpose of America's participation on the side of the Allies. The League, in some form or other, was the method by which

it was hoped, in the Peace Treaty, to create a mechanism for preventing future great wars. This hope, however, while it existed, at that time, in the overwhelming majority of the populations of Europe, was not shared by the governments. Among the holders of power, President Wilson was alone in his aspirations, and European statesmen had little difficulty in bamboozling him and many of his European admirers. The Treaty, it is true, contained his League of Nations, but in a form which, it was confidently foreseen, would prove ineffective for the objects which he had in view.

The League, as created at Versailles, had defects of two kinds. On the one hand, it left national sovereignties completely intact, and provided no machinery for compelling respect for the Covenant. On the other hand, it was part of a vindictive Treaty imposed upon Germany by the victors and containing the war-guilt clause. (Connected with this in spirit was the refusal to admit the existence of the Soviet Government.) The refusal of the United States to become a member of the League was a blow not expected by those who brought it into existence, but it greatly diminished whatever power for good the League might still have possessed.

We may pass by the minor functions of the

League, in regard to the rights of minorities, labour legislation, the white slave traffic, etc. Some of these functions have been carried out well, some badly, but none of them concerns our problem, which is the prevention of war. A curious example of impotence was given in 1919 and 1920, when the League was just coming into existence. Not the League as such, but all its major Powers together with the United States, made war on the Soviet Government, but failed to shake it. The Covenant neither justified nor condemned this action, and yet it was such as might, in other circumstances, provoke a first-class war—for instance, in Spain at the present moment. The whole question of intervention in a civil war was one for which no provision had been made. The only thing that was made definite as a result of anti-Soviet intervention was that all the Great Powers in the League, with the United States to boot, may be powerless to coerce one State, even when it is in the throes of a civil war. Yet the possibility of such coercion was the axiom upon which the League, as an engine of peace, was based.

The anti-German bias of the League was an even graver obstacle to the fulfilment of its supposed functions. Any infringement of the Treaty of Versailles could be condemned as a breach of

international law, and the League, under the leadership of France and England, became virtually an alliance of victors to preserve the status quo. Machinery for the revision of treaties was provided in the Covenant, but so long as Germany was not a member of the League no member had any interest in invoking this machinery, and even after Germany became a member there was no hope of success in demanding the drastic revisions which justice required. Experience has since shown that these were only to be obtained by the threat of force, without which the legal machinery would not have been allowed to function.

The failure in regard to Germany, from the end of the war down to the present day; was, perhaps, the most serious of all the League's mistakes. It is customary in England to lay all the blame for this upon the French, and it cannot be denied that theirs is the heaviest responsibility. But ours is much greater than most of us realize. We had secured the virtual abolition of the German navy, and the mandate for a number of German colonies. We did not, until the rise of Hitler terrified us, propose any modification in these respects. The modifications that we desired were such as were disadvantageous to the French, not to ourselves. It is true that we favoured less drastic demands for

reparations, but this we did as economic realists, in our own interests as well as in those of everyone else. On the question of security, which was, for the French, by far the most important, we failed completely to meet their needs, while believing that our own were fully met. By the Treaty of Versailles, America and England jointly were to have guaranteed France against a German attack. If this guarantee had come into operation, the French would almost certainly have consented to a considerable measure of disarmament, and German nationalism might never have developed as it has done. But America decided not to ratify the Treaty, and we thereupon refused our guarantee, which had been made conditional upon that of the United States. I do not say that we were wrong in doing this ; the question is a complex one, and I' express no opinion on it. But from that moment onwards our acts proved to France that we were not willing to give such guarantees of security as would cause the French to feel justified in reducing their armaments. Indubitably the French policy was short-sighted and narrow-minded, but ours was nothing like so admirable as we are inclined to suppose. And it must be confessed that, by refusing to interpret the Covenant in its plain sense, as binding us to

military support of any victim of aggression, we did more than any other State Member to emasculate the League.

The second really important failure of the League was in regard to Japan. When I say "failure" I do not mean to assert that any other policy could have succeeded ; I mean rather that events proved the incapacity of the League to fulfil the purposes for which it was created. The situation was legally simple : one member of the League made an unprovoked attack upon another, and the League pronounced a condemnation. But to make the condemnation effective might have required a first-class war, which was not felt to be worth while, since the interests of members other than China were not sufficiently involved. There were those who wished to threaten war, but they were idealists and pacifists, who supported their arguments by the contention that Japan would yield to threats, and that actual war would be unnecessary ; economic sanctions at most, they thought, would suffice. But it was clear that this could only be the case if the threat of war was serious, and not mere bluff ; and even then it was by no means certain that Japan would yield. The British Government, for a variety of reasons, has always been friendly to Japan ; the French had pre-

occupations nearer home, and were not willing to lock up their forces in a Far Eastern conflict. The Japanese, therefore, were left as free to carry out their aggressive plans as they would have been if no League of Nations had existed. Nor was there in this anything surprising ; with the present constitution of the League, no other outcome was to be expected. Nations will only go to war when they believe their national interests to be involved ; and the enforcement of international law is not yet recognized as in itself a national interest. I am not at all sure that, in the present state of the world, it is desirable that it should be, since the effect might only be to enlarge the area of wars and make them all world-wide.

The third and most recent of the League's spectacular failures was in regard to Abyssinia. Here it came nearer to success than in the case of Japan, because one important member of the League, namely Great Britain, had important imperial interests which were opposed to those of Italy and favourable to the maintenance of the status quo, or, failing that, to a partition of Abyssinia. Great Britain, therefore, displayed an enthusiasm for the coercive clauses of the Covenant which had hitherto been shown only by France. France, on the other hand, hoping to retain Italy as an ally

against Germany, continually sabotaged all the efforts made by the League, and ensured the triumph of Italy, which, nevertheless, immediately proceeded to make friends with Germany. In old days, Great Britain would have acted alone against Italy, but now the fear of what aeroplanes can effect against battleships made this impossible. Nothing, therefore, remained to the British except to sabotage, in return, the attempts of France to bring about joint action against Hitler. This is, in practice, what results from the attempt to practise "collective security."

The three great failures of the League—in regard to Germany, Japan, and Italy—enable us to diagnose its essential weaknesses, and to see what a League would have to be if these weaknesses were to be absent.

All the defects of the League may be summed up in the one fact that it is not a government. A government has legislative, executive, and judicial functions ; it does not require unanimity, but can act by a majority. The League of Nations has no legislative body : neither the Council nor the Assembly can coerce dissentient members, nor can treaties be revised without the consent of the signatories. The League has no executive : the only force at its disposal is that of member States,

which is used or withheld as national governments decide, not as the League may demand. There is, it is true, a judicial authority, the Hague Court ; but no one is obliged to submit to it, and if it were asked who was the aggressor in a first-class war, the fighting would probably be finished before it gave a decision. Indeed, in view of the difficulty of legally defining the term " aggressor ", it is to be expected that no decision would be legally possible. A body which is to fulfil the purposes for which the League was founded must be a government in the full sense of the word, and so long as it is not a government it will inevitably disappoint its supporters. That this must be the case I shall now endeavour to establish.

The first difficulty that confronts the League method of preserving peace is the immense strength of single States, especially in their own areas. Of the strength of Russia and Japan we have already spoken ; the strength of the United States is even greater. Suppose—merely by way of a theoretical illustration—that the United States were to attack some South American member of the League ; what, in such a case, could the League do ? It would be even more powerless than it was in the case of Japan and China. It is not always the case that a single State can be compelled to yield

to the rest of the world in combination, especially if, as will usually happen, many nations are only prepared for very moderate sacrifices. Still less can an alliance of recalcitrant States be coerced. Imagine—to take, this time, a by no means far-fetched illustration—an alliance of Germany, Italy, and Japan, and suppose the leading Powers in the League of Nations, *i.e.* England, France, and Russia, wished to use the League to coerce this alliance. Is it to be supposed that the minor Powers would decide their action in accordance with the Covenant? Would Denmark hurl defiance at Germany? Would Uruguay drill her manhood and send it to perish in Flanders? What would Poland do? It is obvious that each country would decide in accordance with its national interest, without the slightest regard to the League. England, France, and Russia might loudly proclaim that they were engaged in police action against international criminals; but they did this very effectively in 1914, when no League existed. Except in their propaganda, the war would just be a war like another, differing from the Great War only by its greater destructiveness. The League of Nations, as it is now, is merely an alliance of certain Powers against certain others; it differs from the pre-war triple Entente solely by being less reliable.

Even if the League were world-wide, it would still have to contend with the difficulty that, in any quarrel, most nations would feel that their interests were not involved, and would therefore not be prepared to make great efforts. It is true that, when once public law is established, the punishment of a lawbreaker is obviously in the interests of the law-abiding. Nevertheless, municipal law does not rely upon ordinary citizens in dealing with criminals, but employs the services of the police. In the middle ages, when the authority of the King was being established, there were long civil wars, changes of dynasty, assassinations of kings, and so on. If kings had depended upon the public spirit of citizens they would still be facing the barons at Runnymede or Evesham, or being murdered in castle dungeons. It was by their armed forces that they won the victory, and it was only after they had won that the sentiment in favour of "the King's peace" acquired its present force. The League of Nations is not in a position to imitate the rigour of Henry VII or of Louis XI. And in view of the horrors of modern war, it is hardly surprising that nations hesitate to incur them except when they believe that their own vital interests are involved. Yet, so long as this is the case, and so long as the League of Nations

cannot compel its members to co-operate in common efforts, the method of joint war against an aggressor would have little chance of success against a first-rate Power even if every single state throughout the world had signed the Covenant.

—There is another difficulty which, so long as national sovereignty remains intact, is inseparable from the League-of-Nations method. Each Power has its own imperialist aims, and often these can easily be disguised so as to seem to be inspired by the most idealistic motives. If we had gone to war with Italy on the Abyssinian question, it would not have been to preserve the independence of a gallant little nation, but to safeguard the route to India and the headwaters of the Blue Nile. Yet ardent pacifists clamoured for measures against Italy—such as the attempt to close the canal—which must have led to war. Thus the League becomes part of a new technique of imperialism, and of a new propaganda which, once more, turns idealists into war-mongers. So long as we retain separate sovereign States and our present economic system, so long imperialism will remain ; and if there is a powerful sentiment in favour of the League the cleverest imperialists will find ways of enlisting this sentiment in their support. Thus what are nominally League wars, but really wars for the

national interests of some dominant group in the League, will receive the support of those who hate war. The only effect of the League, in such a case, will be to mislead the pacifists and stultify their efforts. Of all this the attitude of sanctionists on the Abyssinian question afforded a distressing illustration. If, in general, you are opposed to war, but on a particular occasion men whom you usually distrust present you with what seem to be good arguments for fighting just this once, it is wise to examine the arguments very closely, and to remember that a persuasive tongue is one of the chief requisites for achieving political power.

But while, on the one hand, League of Nations talk may inveigle pacifists into support of what is really an imperialist war, there is also an exactly opposite difficulty which is inherent in the Covenant as a method of preserving the peace. The sentiment which supports the League of Nations is mainly a pacifist sentiment, and yet the League cannot be effective unless it is willing, on occasion, to make war. Pacifists who support the League are willing to use the threat of war when they think that will suffice, but hesitate to proceed to actual war when the threat proves insufficient. When their genuinely warlike opponents call their bluff, it appears that there was no reality in their pre-

vious bluster, which was like the bark of a nervous dog that runs away when its noise fails to inspire terror. It is a difficult thing to use pacifist sentiment as the driving force in a war. When the attempt is made, some of the pacifists will refuse to support the war, while others will lose their pacifism. Less will be achieved than by an equal but warlike population, and what is achieved is not likely to be anything that a pacifist, in quiet times, would recognize to be desirable.

If the method of sanctions is to be used effectively, the sentiment behind it must be respect for law, not love of peace. It is true that, if respect for international law were sufficiently strong, peace would result in the long run ; but it would result in consequence of a series of wars from which pacifists would shrink. Respect for law may inspire a wish to punish the criminal, and may thus afford an incentive to war ; but love of peace, if used as an incentive to war, produces an inner conflict which is likely to prevent effective action. This inner conflict shows itself outwardly in the present policy of the Labour Party, which opposes armaments while advocating measures likely to bring war.

I come now to another class of difficulties, of a more detailed kind. There is first the difficulty of defining an "aggressor", of which I have

already spoken. It is enough to say that no definition has yet been proposed which has seemed satisfactory to authorities on international law, and that every imaginable definition would lend itself to deceit and trickery at the outbreak of a war. Perhaps in time the inculcation of a warlike spirit may come to be considered a form of aggression ; schools may be forbidden to teach excessive nationalism, and newspapers may be prevented from publishing incitements to national hatred. The doctrine that war is the noblest of human activities—which is the official teaching in totalitarian States—may be made illegal, or at least deprived of all government support. But these are distant prospects, nor do they in any degree facilitate the definition of aggression. For the present we must expect that, in any serious war, each side will claim to be acting on the defensive, and will be able to make out a plausible case in defence of this claim.

An even more serious obstacle to the method contemplated in the Covenant arises from the immensity and suddenness of modern war. All the initial moves must be planned in time of peace—the time-table of trains and boats, the number of men and munitions to be conveyed in each, the exact destination of each company. In 1914, the

British and French War Offices had concerted all this, and in doing so had, of necessity, come to know each other's military secrets. Suppose we had been uncertain whether to support the French or the Germans, we should have had to prepare another set of plans for the latter event. But if such uncertainty had existed, neither the French nor the Germans, since they would have viewed us as possible enemies, would have allowed us to acquire the knowledge of their military secrets required for concerting a plan. We should have had to wait until we had decided which to support before beginning to make our plans, which would have caused an extremely serious delay. A new war will be far more rapid than the last, and plans which only begin to be made at its outbreak are likely to be useless. If, therefore, we mean to have allies in a war, it is necessary to settle in advance who they are to be, and not to wait until the last moment. Yet unless we wait we cannot adopt the policy of siding against the aggressor.

Consider, for a moment, the concrete situation if a war were to break out between France and Germany, and we had decided in advance that we would side against whichever was the aggressor. Propaganda from both sides would make the facts impossible to ascertain. Even if the French (say)

had agreed to submit the dispute to arbitration, it might be maintained that this was only a blind to cover war preparations and secret attack. One may suppose that the diplomatic tension would grow more and more acute, until one side, or both, came to the conclusion that war was inevitable and that an immediate attack was the only prudent course. If only one side came to this conclusion on a given day, that side, by sudden air raids, could obtain a decisive superiority, very difficult to overcome by subsequent action. If both sides came to the conclusion on the same day, the following night would bring air raids in both countries, perhaps so destructive that the populations would instantly demand peace. In any case, so much harm would be done to both combatants that our intervention, subsequently, in support of one of them would not enable it to remain a great civilized nation. Nor is it likely, after proof had been given of the destructiveness of air raids, that public opinion would allow our Government to intervene in a war in which we had hitherto been neutral.

Similar considerations apply to all the nations of Europe. There is not one of them that can, compatibly with military realism, adopt the policy of waiting till war breaks out and then fighting the side which is deemed to be the aggressor, unless

it is decided in advance which side this is to be. If an ignorant public opinion demands the policy of taking sides against the aggressor, practical men in the Government and in the armed forces will find themselves compelled to practise a form of deceit, to decide on co-operation with one group, and to rely on censorship and propaganda to persuade the public, when war comes, that this group is the victim of aggression. This is what was successfully accomplished in 1914, and it will be accomplished again if we have a Government that knows its own mind.

The United States is not faced with these difficulties, and it is natural that President Wilson, in framing the Covenant, should not have realized the difference, in this respect, between his Continent and Europe. For the present, America is not open to air attack either across the Atlantic or across the Pacific. Moreover America has irresistible power, and can, by intervention at any stage, insure the victory of the side which it favours, or at any rate the defeat of the other side. America cannot prevent the victims of aggression from suffering appalling disaster, but can prevent the aggressors from deriving any advantage from their action. If, therefore, it were known that America would intervene against the aggressor, that would

tend strongly to the preservation of peace. But this is not known. And if I were an American, I do not think I should advocate departure from the policy of neutrality. Europe has no right to expect America to make immense sacrifices to save it from the consequences of its own folly.

It is clear that collective security, as a method of preventing war, cannot succeed unless there is an international armed force, under the orders of an international authority, and sufficiently strong to be able to defeat easily any probable combination of rebel States. The day may come when the creation of such a force will become feasible; indeed, without such a force it seems impossible that war should be permanently prevented. But it is clear that we are still a very long way from this solution. No one can imagine Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin voluntarily surrendering national power. England may become willing to consent to some such plan *after* complete disaster in war, but not before. The United States would never consent unless the nominally international force was really under the orders of Washington. The love of national independence is so strong in every great country that public opinion prefers the risk of war, however appalling, to being at the mercy of an international force. Much terrible experience will

be necessary before mankind prefer an international State to death and destruction.

Nevertheless, since collective security is the most popular antidote to war, and since, if it could be made a reality, it would be a real preventive, it is worth while to pursue further the requirements of such a scheme.

The new weapons—air and gas, and bacteriological warfare if it becomes practicable—would have to be confined entirely to the international force. All the older weapons might then safely be allowed to national armies, which would still be capable of keeping order among the civil population, but would be quite unable to contend against attack from the air. So long as the air force remained loyal to the international government, resistance to it would be hopeless, and nations would be compelled to forgo war or else suffer all the horrors of gas and incendiary and high explosive bombs without any means of counter-attack. Civil aviation also would, of course, have to be in the hands of the international authority.

The loyalty of the air force, it is true, might be difficult to secure. There would be danger of two kinds, from nationalism and from political sympathies. To avoid the former, it would be necessary that there should be no national units,

that each squadron should contain men from different countries, that the higher commands should be distributed with strict impartiality, and that the Commander-in-Chief should be chosen from some small essentially neutral country such as Norway or Sweden. These precautions would, no doubt, cease to be necessary after some twenty years or so, since the air force would, in time, develop its own *esprit de corps* ; but in the infancy of the system they would be indispensable.

The danger of political sympathies would be more difficult to avoid. The air force would tend to have an oligarchical outlook, and might be expected to support an international form of Fascism. This problem is the old one of political control over armed forces, which was successfully solved in England and America, but for which no simple recipe can be given. There is an obvious danger in such a concentration of power as would belong to the international aeronauts, but it is an inevitable result of modern technique, and even if they abused their power the consequences would be less disastrous than those of a great war.

The existence of an irresistible international force is only one condition—though the most necessary and also the most difficult—for the realization of collective security. There must also be an inter-

national executive and an international legislature. And, if these institutions are to work, there must be a strong public opinion in their favour. Each of these demands some discussion.

The executive will have to give orders to the international force. There will not be the difficulty that at present exists as to who is the aggressor in a dispute. The attitude will be that adopted at present by the police when there is a quarrel in the street : first both sides will be reduced to submission, and after that a leisurely judicial inquiry can be held.

The legislative authority will have power to revise treaties even if one party objects, and even if both object provided some general interest is involved. Treaties will not be valid unless sanctioned by the legislature, since they may adversely affect third parties. Transference of territory will be within the competence of the legislature. When I say that these things will be the case, I do not mean to be making a prophecy ; I am merely enumerating the conditions which the central authority must fulfil if it is to prevent war. The world cannot be stereotyped, and if no legal method of change exists, violence, sooner or later, is inevitable. The obstinate defence of the Treaty of Versailles by the League of Nations has been one of its greatest defects. If war is to be avoided, it must not be very difficult to

make desirable reforms by peaceful means ; and as to what is desirable, a majority must decide.

No mechanism, however perfect, will work unless it is supported by a strong public opinion. The establishment of an international government will not be successful unless most of the civilized nations have become persuaded that unrestricted national sovereignty involves disaster. When this stage has been reached, it may be possible to coerce a minority of recalcitrant nations, and the mechanism that we have been considering may be very useful as supplying a method of coercion that can pass into voluntary participation as public opinion in the dissentient nations becomes acquiescent, as it soon will do if resistance is obviously hopeless. International government will become the road to peace, and will give real collective security, as soon as a considerable majority of mankind have come to favour it. But from such an attitude public opinion everywhere is still far removed.

It must be remembered, however, that events move more swiftly now than they did in former times, and the next great war is sure to have profound effects of various kinds. Perhaps, when Europe is in ruins, a new Wilson, more firmly supported by his compatriots, will create a new and more efficient League ; perhaps, in view of the

world-supremacy which, in such circumstances, will belong to the United States, connections with Europe may no longer appear as entanglements, but as police work ; and in this way, possibly, civilization may save itself from the drift towards suicide. It is not a near prospect, and it is only to be reached through an intervening period of terror ; but it offers some ultimate hope to those who find the present almost too dreadful to be borne.

CHAPTER FIVE

Alliances



TO THE OLD POLICY OF ALLIANCES THERE ARE objections which we have already briefly considered. Nevertheless we are compelled to consider this policy afresh, because, so far as Europe is concerned, a League of Nations policy has come to mean, in effect, an alliance between England, France, and Russia, supported by certain minor Powers. Germany, Italy, and Japan, even if one or more of them were nominally to rejoin the League, have at present aims which will not be countenanced by those who control decisions at Geneva. These three countries together are quite as strong as the Central Powers were in 1914, and would have at least as good a chance of victory in a world war. Those who, in England, wish the League to remain the cornerstone of our foreign policy, are very anxious that we should nevertheless not be committed to

France and Russia, since they recognize that, now as before the Great War, the division of Europe into two hostile camps makes it almost certain that peace will not be long preserved. They find fault with Ministers who make speeches friendly to France, and they deprecate hostility to the Nazis. For the effort to avoid dividing Europe into two camps there is a great deal to be said ; I shall examine the arguments in the next chapter. But this policy is not compatible with adherence to the League. Powers which have left the League because they could not endure the limitations which it seeks to place on internationally lawless actions must be regarded as hostile to the principle of collective security, and if we are to adhere to this principle, we must seek to work with those who still acknowledge it. We may be wise to acknowledge no obligations except those imposed by Locarno and the Covenant, but we shall have to admit that these obligations bind us, in certain not improbable circumstances, to France and Russia, but are very unlikely to lead us to co-operate with Germany or Japan, or with Italy unless that Power again makes friends with France.

In favour of a frank alliance with France and Russia it may be urged (1) that they are progressive while Fascist governments are reactionary ;

(2) that if the League of Nations is to avoid the failures of recent years, it must be turned into a more efficient and more closely knit body than it has hitherto been ; (3) that certain Powers can be recognized as aggressive, and others as unaggressive, and that the latter must combine if they are not each to suffer separate disaster ; (4) that only a close defensive union of unaggressive States can restrain the impulse to war which exists in the countries that they have reason to fear.

The first of these arguments I shall leave aside for the present, since it will be considered in the Chapter on Wars of Principle.

The second argument, for an adherent of the League, should be unanswerable. We saw in the last chapter that it is not practical politics to wait till a war begins, and then take part against the aggressor. Japan and Italy have, in very recent times, committed acts of aggression, and show every sign of being willing to commit others. Germany has ignored treaties—Locarno as well as Versailles—and has built up a terrifying war machine, which is evidently intended to be used when the suitable moment arrives. I know that past injustices have proved to Germany that she can only achieve legal equality with other Great Powers by inspiring fear ; I know that the lessons in militarism which

Germany has learnt have been taught by England and France. But unfortunately every moving body is possessed of momentum, and the effort by which Germany has achieved equality has seemed to put superiority within reach. In the present temper of the Nazi rulers, it is not to be supposed that any obstacle except fear would prevent them from embarking upon a war of conquest. Germany, therefore, equally with Italy and Japan, must be reckoned an aggressive State. And in fact the three are tending more and more to act together, so that opposition to any one necessarily entails opposition to the two others also.

As against this, it is argued that, if all Germany's just claims are met in a friendly spirit, the militaristic temper which is now dominant will gradually become softened, membership of the League may again be desired, and Hitler may work loyally with the other Powers at Geneva. This may, of course, be true, but I confess that I think it very improbable. The treatment of defenceless opponents within the Reich suggests the mentality of the bully, who grows worse, not better, through success. The crusading zeal of rank-and-file Nazis will give them a passionate enthusiasm for what will seem a holy war. Economic conditions will make the rulers anxious to achieve a continual series of successes in the inter-

national field, and when all injustices against Germany have been rectified the only way to achieve fresh successes will be to inflict injustices on others. The defeat of 1918 was felt as a humiliation, and the national self-esteem of the Nazis will hardly be appeased except by victory in an equally important struggle. The impulse to militant nationalism given by Bismarck, although he himself wished to check it after 1871, went on irresistibly to the Great War ; and the impulse given by Hitler is almost sure to go on in the same way, unless the world can be so organized as to make German ambitions quite obviously unrealizable.

This is the view of France and Russia. In England, while many fear that it may be true, most still hope that it is not. For my part, very reluctantly, I am compelled to believe it. It is this that makes the outlook so grave and the hope of peace so slender. But it is useless to base a policy on illusions, and if the truth is bad, no purpose is served by refusing to face it. Of course, in such a matter, there must be uncertainty, but the probability, upon which we have to act, seems to be that Germany will engage in aggressive war whenever the chance of victory is judged to be good.

Assuming this to be the case, would a defensive alliance of England, France, and Russia be suffi-

ciently strong to deter the Germans? If so, there would be very strong grounds for creating such an alliance, as the striking force of the League if that phraseology is preferred.

The policy of Hitler, as developed in *Mein Kampf*, is to avoid uniting Germany's neighbours against her, and to repeat the tactics of Bismarck rather than of William II. He would like to be allowed to attack the Bolsheviki while Western Europe stood aside, and to deal with France only after achieving complete victory in the East. Rather mistakenly, he has explained this policy with great frankness, with the natural result that France and Russia have formed an alliance. He has always professed friendly feelings towards England, and our present Government would have no objection to his defeating communism by an invasion of Russia. We should like, therefore—by “we” I mean those who control our policy—to leave him a free hand in the East, provided we could be sure of his not turning his attention to the West. But we still do not wish to see Germany established in the Channel Ports, and therefore, if France and Belgium are involved, we may, following our traditional statecraft, find ourselves compelled to side with them, however much we may dislike an alliance with the Soviet Government. This is the problem as it presents itself to

opportunist that no predictions are possible. At the approach of a Great War, Italian help would be put up to auction, and would be given to the side that, in Mussolini's judgment, was able and willing to pay the highest price. Sympathy with Nazism and dislike of Bolshevism would, I believe, play scarcely any part in his decision.

Poland is another doubtful factor. In that country, pro-French and pro-German forces are waging a contest, peaceful as yet, but growing gradually more acute, and likely, at no distant date, to develop into civil war. A situation will then arise similar to that in Spain, but infinitely more dangerous. Germany on the one side, and France and Russia on the other, will feel that the victory of their friends is a matter of vital importance ; indeed, a Nazi Poland would be an asset to Germany, and a communist or socialist Poland would be an equal asset to France and Russia. It is scarcely possible that the two sides should remain passive while the Poles fought it out. Each side would give help to its own partisans, at first surreptitiously, then openly, and before long the two sides would be at war. Of all the danger points of Europe, Poland is now perhaps the most explosive.

Nor is civil war in Poland the only way in which danger could arise through events in that country.

There is no impossibility in an alliance between Germany and Russia, leading to a new partition. This would be in line with Prussian tradition, and would receive the blessing of Bismarck's ghost, if it could return to the Wilhelmstrasse. Everything possible is being done by Stalin to show that no question of principle divides him from Hitler, and I cannot doubt that he would be glad if the differences between the two countries could be composed at the expense of the traditional victim ; while Dr. Schacht, during his visit to Paris at the end of August 1936, mentioned in a speech that Germany would come to an understanding with the U.S.S.R. if communist propaganda were abandoned. The fulfilment of this condition has seemed recently increasingly possible.

It does not seem, therefore, that the policy of an alliance between England, France, and Russia would give any security for the preservation of peace. If it is to be defended, it must be on other grounds. It may be said that there is no hope of avoiding a great war, but that there is hope of preventing the military dictatorships from conquering the whole of Europe. Such arguments, however, have to do with the question of wars of principle, which I do not wish to consider yet.

There are some who would like Great Britain to

be definitely more friendly to Germany than to France. From the point of view of the preservation of peace, ignoring all other considerations, what is there to be said for this policy? It is clear that if, in a great war, England joined the German group, or even preserved a benevolent neutrality, the German group would have a better chance of victory than the Franco-Russian group. It follows that the Franco-Russian group would put up with a great deal rather than go to war. I think, however, that, even then, they would fight rather than surrender any point that they considered really vital. They would fight, for example, if there were a Polish civil war. Probably they would fight if Czechoslovakia were attacked or made to suffer a Nazi insurrection. In either of these events, they would feel that their own existence was at stake, and that great causes were dependent upon their championship. And they would have some grounds for hope: Russia is not very vulnerable to air attack; the Russian and French air fleets together could inflict very great damage on Germany; and England would hardly venture to take an actual part in the war, both because there would be a strong adverse public opinion, and because there is reason to fear the French air force. On a vital issue, these considerations would make the French and

Russians willing to fight. Anglo-German friendship, therefore, affords no issue from the prospect of war.

In the above arguments I have been thinking only of the immediate situation as it exists at the present day. Before very long aeroplane development will inevitably bring the United States into the war arena, and will thereby greatly change the balance of power. The United States is friendly to France, and, in a crisis, to England ; the large Jewish population is hostile to Germany ; and there is considerable feeling against Japan. *Per contra*, there is still, especially in big business circles, a dread of Bolshevism, which would make any assistance to Russia repugnant to the most powerful individuals in America ; but this feeling is probably not strong enough to counterbalance those on the other side. Moreover, dislike of war and condemnation of the aggressor is a very strong force in American public opinion, and I think it may be assumed that this, as in 1914, would operate against Germany. We may therefore assume that *if* the United States intervened, it would be on the side of France. We may also assume that, as soon as America becomes liable to air attacks on a large scale, the present aloofness from European and Asiatic affairs will cease. If, by hook or by crook, a great war can be postponed until that stage is

reached, it may never occur. America is immensely powerful, and is on the side of sanity. Modern war is so dreadful that if the holders of power in Europe were all sane there would be no chance of it. When the weight of America comes to be added on the side that is opposed to aggressive adventures, the reasons against aggression will become so overwhelmingly obvious that the danger of war may rapidly diminish, and constructive efforts in the direction of peace and disarmament may again have a chance of success. But I scarcely dare to hope that Europe will abstain from war during the twenty years or so that must intervene before that time comes.

So far, I have considered alliances only from the standpoint of the prevention of war. But in the minds of statesmen the chief motive for concluding them has always been not peace, but victory. The two are, however, connected, since wars do not occur, as a rule, when one side is *sure* of victory. But for French support, Czechoslovakia would have had to yield to Germany and Yugoslavia to Italy. Alliances become a cause of war when the forces on each side are about evenly balanced, but, owing to patriotic self-confidence, each side thinks it has a preponderance. This was the case in 1914, and it may again become the case at any moment.

Assuming, what our previous discussions have

tended to show, that Great Britain cannot, by any system of alliances, make war appreciably less probable, two questions remain to be considered. First, can we, by joining either group, make reasonably sure of its being victorious? And, second, is the victory of either side sufficiently important to make it worth while to undergo the suffering and destruction which we are bound to suffer in a serious war? I shall not attempt an answer to the first question, which is one for experts. But as to the second I have no doubt whatever. As we saw in Chapter II, the destruction and panic in Great Britain, if either France or Germany is among our enemies, are likely to be so great that, even assuming a complete victory, we shall be powerless for good, and indifferent to whatever idealistic aims we may have had at the beginning of the war. Hatred and blind fury, the natural reactions after terror, will lead to a peace even more vindictive than that of Versailles. Internal anarchy will only be prevented by a military dictatorship, which may not prove to be temporary. The population will be greatly diminished, the level of civilization will be lowered, and victory will be no less disastrous to the world than defeat would have been.

We are thus forced to the conclusion that there is no valid argument for alliance with either of the two groups into which the Continent is divided.

The Policy of Expedients



THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, ANNOYED WITH FRANCE and afraid of Germany, aware that war would be a disaster to Europe in general and to England in particular, finds itself in a position of extraordinary difficulty. The policy of seeking security through the League of Nations has broken down ; no security can be obtained either by alliance with France or by alliance with Germany ; and yet, if war breaks out on the Continent, British obligations or what are considered vital British interests are likely to make neutrality very difficult. Ever since the end of the War, nothing has happened as our Government wished. The Bolsheviks survived in spite of Mr. Winston Churchill ; the Turks beat the Greeks in spite of Mr. Lloyd George. The French occupied the Ruhr, and at every stage avoided making concessions to Germany until too late. Their refusal to

accept Hoover's moratorium proposal in 1931 greatly aggravated the world crisis, made the financial position of Germany desperate, and helped to force us off the gold standard. Finally their failure to support us against Italy in the Abyssinian question exposed us to a resounding failure. It is not surprising that our Government, in view of all these incidents, has not, of late, felt very friendly towards France.

But meanwhile, not without British connivance, the Germans have recovered the position that they enjoyed in the world before 1914. Our authorities, apparently believing still in the importance of the sea, felt that they had done a good stroke of business when they concluded the Naval Treaty with Hitler, according to which Germany is to be content with one third of our strength in battleships and cruisers, while being allowed parity in submarines. To those who understand the paramount importance of the air, it is not surprising that the German Government liked this treaty. Before 1914, our defence against invasion could be safely left to the navy ; it seems that in the Admiralty there are some who suppose this to be still the case. The German Government, like all students of modern war, knows that the next contest will be decided in the air, not on the sea. And when we had secured superiority

at sea, we discovered that the Germans had suddenly acquired superiority in the air. In a panic we set to work to increase our air force, but meanwhile, until the increase was effected, we felt it necessary to avoid every possible occasion of dispute. It is hoped that, when our air force is again sufficient to inspire terror, we shall be able to speak once more with authority in the councils of Europe, and to feel secure that no foreign Power will interfere with our vital interests. But in the meanwhile it is necessary to be conciliatory ; and, since any war, whether we join in or not, is likely to involve our vital interests, it is imperative for us to try to keep everybody else from quarrelling. The international diplomatic situation is like nothing so much as a family gathering brought together by a good-natured aunt when all the rest are disputing as to the interpretation of the old man's will : she realizes, what the rest forget, that if they start litigation the whole estate will go to the lawyers, and there will be nothing for any of the family. She, therefore, is for peace at any price : whenever either side makes a provocative remark, she quickly changes the subject, and hopes that no one will have noticed ; but for her it is a nerve-wracking business. This is almost exactly the state of mind of the British Government since the sudden expan-

sion of the German air force and the reconciliation between Hitler and Mussolini. The resulting policy is not heroic, and is easy to criticize ; but it is far from easy to think of any more definite policy which does not lead straight to disaster.

The Labour Party, which still believes that it is in favour of peace, has, ever since the beginning of the Abyssinian crisis, advocated policies which, if adopted, would quickly lead to a general war. At the present moment (August, 1936) there is among Socialists, both in France and England, a clamour for intervention in Spain. Now it may reasonably be maintained that the defeat of Fascism in Spain is sufficiently important to be worth a great war. It may be said : there must, before long, be a life-and-death struggle between Fascism on the one side and the united front on the other ; if England and France refrain from supporting the Spanish Government, Germany and Italy will secure the victory of the rebels ; thus while we remain inactive a great country will be lost to our side, those Spaniards whom we can consider our friends will be massacred, and by acquiring Ceuta Mussolini will control the entrance to the Mediterranean. These grounds may well be held sufficient to justify a policy involving grave risk of war ; I do not myself hold them to be sufficient, for reasons which I shall

discuss in a later Chapter, but I feel their strength and am, at times, almost persuaded by them. But the bulk of the Labour Party, while advocating a bold policy which involves risk of war, at the same time professes to be against war, and to be so much against war as to object to increase of armaments. What can be more absurd than an attempt to frighten men like Hitler and Mussolini without the armed forces necessary to win their respect, and while declaring, in a stage aside : "Of course we do not mean to fight them really, only to make them think we do." Such a policy, in dealing with such men, is hopeless. If you are opposed to armaments, you must give up crusading ; if you wish to go crusading in our day, you must lay in your store of bombs and poison gases. For it is by asphyxiating the wives and children of the Paynim that the modern crusader must seek victory.

It is true that the Labour Party's opposition to an increase of armaments has, as a result of criticism, taken on a new form ; it has become, not an undertaken on a new form ; it has become, not an un-compromising opposition, but a demand for the announcement of some definite policy in defence of which the armaments are to be used. It is implied that our Government ought still to adhere to the policy of Collective Security. But this, as we have seen if interpreted realistically, means alliance with

France and Russia ; this means the situation of 1914 ; and this means the Great War over again. As a peace policy, there is nothing to be said for this course of action ; if it is to be defended, it must be on the ground that a war against Fascism is worth while on grounds of principle.

The present Government does not want a war of principle, or any other war. Some of its supporters like Fascism, others dislike it ; but no one in the Government thinks it worth while to risk national disaster for either cause. For reasons which are not theirs, I agree with them on this matter ; and for reasons which are not the Labour Party's, I agree with them in opposing every increase of armaments. But for the present I am not concerned to state my own views, but to set forth the considerations which may be supposed to be influencing the Government.

It is obvious that there are in the Conservative Party two trends of opinion, one favourable to France, and the other to Germany. The first has its chief strength in the Foreign Office, the second in the City. The Foreign Office, if it could have its way, would be prepared for an alliance with France provided this did not involve any obligations in relation to Russia. But France is not prepared to stand by while Russia is attacked, and therefore it is

difficult for us to support France without supporting Russia. Our Locarno obligations compel us to defend France if attacked, but not if involved in war through coming to the assistance of the Soviet Government. By acknowledging these obligations and refusing to extend them, we attempt to offer an inducement to France to abandon the Russian alliance. In the meantime, we struggle to avoid any situation which would force us to act under the Locarno treaty. This, I think, fairly represents the Foreign Office point of view.

Pro-German opinion in the Conservative Party is not, like the opinion of the Foreign Office, a matter of calculation as to British national interests ; it is inspired partly by sentiment, partly by the recollection of past financial troubles. The sentiment is a complex one ; in some it is political, and consists in admiration of Hitler for having defeated the Socialists and Communists, while in others (especially those who fought in the War) it is based upon admiration and respect for the Germans as individuals. The City also has a sentiment, but it has been generated by financial experience : while we were still on the gold standard, the Bank of France used its power tyrannously and short-sightedly, producing ruin in Germany and immense losses among the British creditors of German banks. From

these different causes, together with the realization that Germany was treated too hardly after the War, a strong feeling in favour of Germany has arisen, and this feeling is by no means confined to Conservatives. If it could have become effective in the days of the Weimar Republic, it would have been wholly beneficent ; now, unfortunately, it becomes a force in support of militarism and reaction.

It is not, however, a force in favour of war. Our imperial interests prevent an alliance with Germany, and it is all to the good if friendly feelings towards the Germans prevent an alliance with their enemies. Moreover admiration of the Germans as a nation is entirely justified. In intelligence, courage, and public spirit they surpass all other nations. At the moment, it is true, they have an abominable government, but so should we have if we had suffered as they have since 1918. Governments are not eternal, but the merits of the Germans are important to mankind, and may soon again be liberated from their present bondage to cruelty and war. The German nation must not be identified with Hitler, Goebbels, and Göring, and it will be a misfortune to mankind if these men compel the world to inflict another defeat upon their compatriots.

On the balance, therefore, it is a good thing that British sympathies are neither wholly with

Germany, nor wholly with France. The result of this uncertainty is, it is true, an uncertainty in British policy ; but perhaps any decided policy which has a chance of being adopted would be even worse than the present vacillation. Any crystallising of the situation would make war more likely ; and, on the other hand, every postponement of war makes it possible that some large new cause may prevent it altogether. In 1914, Social Democracy in Germany and revolution in Russia were not far from being able to reverse the policy of those two countries ; perhaps two years more without war would have made changes that would have brought about a long period of secure peace. Perhaps, if peace, however precariously, is preserved for another few years, some way may be found of easing the tension. Perhaps—as the British Government presumably hopes—diplomatic successes will make the Nazis more reasonable, and less willing to risk in war what they will have won without it. I do not myself think that this will happen, but it is possible, and every policy which gives a chance of averting war, however slender, is worth pursuing.

But if this is really the Government's policy, what, we must ask, is the purpose of the sudden increase of armaments ? It is evident that, however much we may wish peace to be preserved, we fear that we

may be involved in war. "Our frontier is on the Rhine," we have been told ; and it is the obligation, in certain circumstances, to defend France and Belgium which makes our new battleships and aeroplanes appear necessary. If we are strong enough—so runs the argument—Germany will hesitate to do anything which would bring us in on the side of France and Russia, while, conversely, France and Russia will avoid any *casus belli* which would not bring us in. Unfortunately, every increase of armaments by one Power is met by an increase on the other side, which requires a further increase by the first Power. The armaments race increases the general nervousness, and makes the financial burdens so severe that war comes to seem scarcely worse. The hope of preserving peace by an increase of armaments has always proved fallacious in the past, and is likely to prove so on this occasion also.

Wars of Principle



IN CONSIDERING POLICY HITHERTO, WE HAVE TAKEN it for granted that war is to be avoided if possible. But most people recognize some causes as so important that, whatever may be the harm done by war, they are worth fighting for. Most wars, it may be admitted, are for power or possessions, but some have, or appear to have, higher aims. A man may fight for his religion, for national independence, for communism, for fascism, for democracy, and so on. A war for an object of this sort may be called a war of principle. The question is : can such wars do good in the present state of the world ? I do not ask whether they can be “ righteous ” or “ morally justified,” because that question, even if it has a definite meaning, is not the important one. The important question is whether such wars can do good, or, to adopt a more subjective attitude,

whether they can achieve the purposes for which they are undertaken. This problem is one which it is very necessary to face, since all the great political issues are tending to take a warlike form.

Civil wars, as opposed to wars between different States, usually involve some principle. For a hundred and thirty years, from Luther to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, Europe was filled with wars of religion ; the doctrinal differences between Protestants and Catholics were felt, on both sides, to be worth killing and dying for. Those who did not adopt the religion of their government could not escape by non-resistance, but were sought out, persecuted, and very frequently burnt. Persecution was so successful that, in most European countries, the dominant religion at the present day is that which was held by the Government in the early seventeenth century. Nor can it be said that either party could have succeeded as well if it, but not the other party, had practised non-resistance. If the German Protestants had not taken up arms, there would soon have been no Protestants in Germany ; and if the German Catholics had avoided war, there would have been no Catholics. As it was, they fought until Germany was devastated and neither side gained anything ; but if one side,

and not the other, had been willing to fight, the peaceable side would have lost everything.

Admitting, therefore, what was common ground to the disputants, that it matters whether people are Protestant or Catholic more than it matters whether they are prosperous, or civilized, or humane, or even alive, the wars of religion were fully justified on one side if it could be assumed that the other side was, in any case, determined to fight. It is true, none the less, that their net effect in promoting either religion was nil, and that in the end sensible people ceased to think the points at issue important. Their ultimate result was to promote free thought, which was equally abhorrent to both parties.

The English Civil War was in part religious, in part political. In the end, the Parliamentary Party was defeated on the religious issue, but victorious in curbing the power of the monarchy. On the whole, it is not easy to see how what was useful in the aims of the Roundheads could have been achieved without war. And of the French Revolution the same may be said. But in each case there was more violence than was useful to the cause, and in each case a military tyranny was the first outcome.

After the fall of Napoleon, such wars as occurred were caused by the conflict of an old principle and

a new one. The old principle, that of Legitimacy, held that States belong to their rulers as lands belong to their proprietors, and that all Governments should combine to suppress revolts. The new principle, that of Nationality, held that nations should choose their own form of government, and that the boundaries of States should coincide with those of nations. This revolutionary doctrine gradually prevailed, was made respectable by Cavour and Bismarck, and was adopted by President Wilson as the basis of the Treaty of Versailles—with the result that millions of Germans, Austrians, and Magyars were placed under foreign domination. The principle was, in fact, always a little vague. In many places, the population is mixed ; the Suez and Panama Canals cannot be left wholly to those who live on their banks ; and so on. But its chief difficulty is psychological : instead of asserting, in practice as in theory, “ each nation has a right to freedom,” it asserts : “ my nation has a right to freedom, but those whom it wishes to oppress are swinish and brutal, so that the general interests of civilization forbid their liberation.” The principle of nationality has thus become a promoter of anarchy and imperialism, and one of the gravest obstacles to peace in the modern world. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the wars which it

has inspired have been largely successful in securing their objects.

So far we have been concerned with the past, and we have seen reason to believe that wars of principle have not infrequently been justified by their results, at least from the standpoint of fervent believers in the principle which happened to be victorious. But the past is misleading if taken as a guide in the present. War has changed its character, and a warlike policy is much more difficult to justify now than at any former time. If we are to act wisely in the very novel circumstances of the present day, we must, where war is concerned, forget many of the "teachings of history". In the remainder of this chapter it is present issues that will concern us.

Force used in defence of the law, when it is sufficiently serious, comes under the head of "wars of principle". A contest between one burglar and the whole police force can hardly be dignified with the name of war, but the suppression of an insurrection which has no general impersonal objects is essentially analogous to the suppression of an individual criminal, and may involve very serious acts of war. If an international government is ever formed, it will be very important to establish its authority, and wars waged by it against recalcitrant

States will be in defence of the law. "The sanctity of treaties", which, along with the abolition of militarism and the ending of war, was among the supposed objects of the Great War, comes under the same head.

Under the influence of nineteenth-century security, respect for law, as an active, conscious sentiment, greatly declined. Byron inculcated admiration for corsairs, and the romantic movement generally preferred great criminals to good citizens. Now that the hold of law is growing less secure, it is again becoming apparent that, unless men respect legality, civilized society is impossible. As science makes violence capable of greater destructiveness, respect for the romantic anarchist becomes increasingly dangerous. I do not mean to say that there should be no such thing as revolution, for there are occasions when it is an essential condition of progress ; but I do mean to say that the occasions for revolution are few, and that, in estimating the good or bad effects, the diminution in the respect for law which it brings about is a large item on the debit side of the account. Although law is enforced when necessary, most civilized people obey it without thought of compulsion ; and if they do not, government has to exercise a great deal of naked force if any kind of order is to be preserved. The

maintenance of respect for the law, by war if necessary, is therefore a matter of the highest social importance.

Karl Marx endeavoured to introduce a new kind of war of principle, namely the class war. He had no success in his lifetime, except for the brief episode of the Paris Commune in 1871 ; but since 1917 the class war has come more and more to the front. Like those who advocate big armaments, he forgot that the other side might take his doctrines to heart. His teaching on this subject has now become the official doctrine in Russia, Italy, Germany, and many smaller countries ; at present it is being championed by the rebel leaders in Spain. Fascists and Communists alike accept the inevitability of the class war ; both sides equally must be regarded as fighting for an ideal. It is true that the Fascist ideal suits the rich, but it is equally true that the Communist ideal suits the poor ; a creed is not to be supposed ungenuine merely because it happens to coincide with self-interest. The peculiar tenseness of the present situation is caused by the fact that, in several important countries, the passion of nationalism and the passions aroused by the class war are inextricably intertwined. The national interests of Germany and Italy are, in the minds of most Germans and Italians, bound up with Fascism,

while the national interests of England and France are bound up with opposition to Germany and Italy, and therefore with the doctrines of the "united front". Reactionaries in France and England, who have the habit of thinking that patriotism is their monopoly, are finding, to their bewilderment, that they must choose between their patriotism and their class interest. On the other hand, Socialists, who have the habit of pacifism, are finding that their creed, in the new circumstances, fits in well with defence of the fatherland, and are thus gradually drifting into a warlike frame of mind. The result is a situation of great danger. The war of principle, in a peculiarly compelling form, provides a cloak for the Socialist's instinctive nationalism, and enables him, quite unconsciously, to indulge in patriotic self-assertion, while in words, and in his conscious thought, he is upholding great international causes.

There are many who, while rejecting the Marxist doctrine of the inevitable class war, nevertheless find themselves in a situation in which, so far as they see, they have no choice, or probably soon will have no choice, except to submit to Fascism or to go to war with it. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that Germany had refused to be neutral in Spain ; should M. Blum nevertheless have pre-

served his neutrality? And if he had not, with the result that he became involved in war with Hitler, should we have sat still and allowed him and the Spanish popular front to be overwhelmed? And if we had sat still, how long would it have been before we had a Fascist Government here? If that should come, those of us who, on pacifist grounds, have advocated neutrality, will be marched off to concentration camps and forcibly taught to believe in violent methods.

All this I admit, and I confess that the old Adam within me boils with rage at the thought of what may happen if we sit still. The matter is, however, too serious to be left to the judgment of the old Adam. Let us first, in order to get away from the atmosphere of passion, consider what conditions, speaking generally, a war of principle must fulfil if it is to be worth waging.

The first condition is, that there must be a considerable likelihood of winning the war. You may admire the heroism of those who fight in a hopeless cause, but you cannot maintain that they do any good. If you are going to be beaten, you had better submit. To take any other view is to put sentiment before reason. In our case, namely that of a war against Fascism, it may be taken that this condition is fulfilled. No one knows who would win, but at

any rate our side would have a good chance of victory.

The second condition is that the cause must be worth dying for. More is made of this than it deserves. To die for a cause that one believes important is a form of happiness, and the Great War showed that most men are capable of it.

The third condition is that the cause must be worth killing for. This is a more serious matter. I have known men who were distinguished for courage in the War, but rejoiced in the fact that, so far as they knew, they had never killed any one. To kill a man like oneself, acting from the same sense of duty, and with an equal belief in his cause, must be very disagreeable to a sensitive man, until experience makes it familiar. But since the act of killing is of the essence of war, no one should uphold war who is not himself prepared to kill.

The fourth condition, which applies only to modern war, is more difficult. If you believe your cause worth fighting for, you must believe that it justifies exterminating large parts of the civil population. I am not now arguing as to whether five per cent, or ten per cent, or fifty per cent of the population of capitals will die as the direct or indirect result of air raids ; I am only assuming that it is sure to be a considerable percentage. You must

be willing to pour gas upon terrified people, and upon children too young to wear masks or to know what it is all about. And if you favour war before it begins, you must think it worth while that the civilian population of your own country should suffer in the same way. In old days men went to war to protect their wives and children—or so they said. Now, as you go to war, you know that nothing you can do will protect your family, and that they stand a good chance of extermination. Women used to admire soldiers and sailors in war time as “our brave defenders”, but there will be none of this in the next war. Indeed, the soldiers and sailors will probably suffer a smaller percentage of casualties than the inhabitants of London. All this destruction, with all that it entails in the way of terror, madness, and anarchy, you must think worth while if you are to support a war for some idealistic purpose.

The fifth and last condition is by far the most difficult: if a war of principle is to be worth fighting, the cause must be secured by victory. If you go to war to end war, and you win, war must be ended; if you go to war against militarism, your victory must produce a world in which there is less militarism than there was before the war; if you fight to make the world safe for democracy,

the defeat of the enemy must not lead to the establishment of military autocracies. Those of you who are old enough, unless you were conscientious objectors, went to war for these purposes in 1914 : what reason have you to suppose that if you go to war for them again, and are again victorious, you will achieve them any more now than you did then ? But, you will say, these were not the real objects of the war ; they were only propaganda phrases. Very true : the objects of the war, on the part of governments, were of a very different kind. The Russians wanted Constantinople, the French wanted Alsace-Lorraine, the English wanted the destruction of the German navy and the ruin of German trade. (I say nothing of the aims of the Central Powers, because we never supposed them to be anything very lofty.) And if another war breaks out, what reason have you to suppose that the fine phrases by which your support is secured will have any more relation to the real aims of governments than they had last time ? Remember the enthusiasm about Abyssinia, the General Election, and then, when the parliamentary majority was secure, the Hoare-Laval proposals. If a war against Germany becomes necessary for imperialistic reasons, it will of course be represented as a war against Fascism. But, even if all goes well, it may be taken as certain that the

men in power in England when the war ends will have no dislike of Fascism, and it is highly probable that they will think a military dictatorship necessary for the preservation of order. The end of all the death and destruction will be the substitution of an English Hitler for the German one. Is this really worth all the trouble?

But I have been supposing a war like the last, in which everything proceeds more or less according to plan. The next war, as we have seen, is not likely to do that. A quotation will serve to remind the reader of what was said earlier about the nature of the next war. Captain Philip S. Mumford, who has had practical experience of the aeroplane in Iraq and elsewhere, in his *Humanity, Air Power and War*, says :

“Taken in aggregate, the situation amounts to this : the Governments of the great powers propose in effect to carry out the mutual destruction of the citizens of the great powers.

“If the British, French, or other governments were to tell their respective subjects that they were carrying out a policy which would finally entail blowing their own people and towns to pieces, those citizens would show very practical signs of wishing to alter the situation. But when the same governments embark upon policies which entail

that those very same citizens shall share the identical fate, but that the German Government will do the British destruction while the British do the German, etc., etc., the peoples hug the tatters of their nationalist rags around themselves and await the storm with a fatalistic calm engendered by false standards of patriotism. Self-destruction would, of course, be folly, but mutual destruction is realistic ! ”

He proceeds to report certain optimistic views as to possible delay in the use of gas, and then continues :

“ It is possible that there may be sufficient truth in this argument to falsify the predictions that the capitals of conflicting powers would lie in smoking ruins within the first twenty-four hours of the opening of hostilities, or even, as is often suggested, before a declaration of war had actually taken place. This is an open question. Nevertheless, there are no logical grounds for hoping that such a fate will not inevitably overtake such towns during the last phase of military operations.”

Hardly any writers whose experience entitles them to an opinion take a more cheerful view than this.

In such a war, what will be the difference between “ winning ” and “ losing ” ? One may assume, on the evidence that we have already given,

that, in England, France, Germany, and Italy, the civilian population would clamour for peace and refuse to stay in munition factories ; one may assume an immense disorderly exodus from big towns and from industrial regions towards the country ; and one may assume, as a result of damage to roads, railways, ports, and shipping, a food shortage which will be increased by the flight of urban populations to remote places where large-scale food distribution will be difficult. If, to begin with, crowds have been herded together in cellars during air-raids, terror will inevitably have produced mass hysteria in an extreme form, with a determination to wreak vengeance on someone. The reader may remember that at Hythe, after an air raid in 1917, " a mob invaded a local aerodrome, stoned the mechanics and attempted to wreck the hangars, because the Royal Air Force unit had not protected the town " (Brigadier-General Groves) ; he will remember also that the total weight of bombs dropped throughout the whole of the last war is expected to be equalled in one night of the next. These facts will enable him, if he has any imaginative power whatever, to form some picture of the mob as it will be after a serious air raid.

The question we are considering is whether it can possibly be worth while to go to war with Fascism

in the hope of defeating it. Since we are discussing wars of principle, I assume that it is genuinely Fascism that is to be defeated if possible, not Germany disguised as Fascism for propaganda purposes. That is, I assume that you would not feel the war a success if it ended in the defeat of Germany combined with the establishment here and in France of governments of the Nazi type. And yet I am persuaded that even you and I would be forced to acquiesce in such a government in such circumstances.

The authorities, from the first, would regard civilian panic as the supreme danger, since it would, unless it were equally great on the other side, inevitably entail the loss of the war. Some belated friends of freedom might protest against the coercive measures that would be taken immediately on the outbreak of war, placing all men and women under a form of military discipline, subjecting their work and their movements to the orders of those in charge of defence. But a very little experience would show that any failure of discipline would increase the disaster tenfold. Terrified mobs are always savage ; it was fear of foreign enemies that produced the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution, it is fear of the Moors which is causing the ferocity of the Spanish people. To compare small things

with great : I took part, in the spring of 1917, in a meeting to welcome the Kerensky Revolution, which had been supported originally by the British Embassy, and was so far thoroughly respectable, except in its desire for a peace without annexations or indemnities. A newspaper distributed leaflets in the public houses near the meeting place, announcing that those who were at the meeting were in league with German aeroplanes, to whom they signalled messages as to the best places for bombs. A mob, led by Dominion soldiers, and consisting largely of drunken viragos armed with boards full of rusty nails, broke in and attacked us, while the police looked on passively. They intervened at last in my defence, because someone, after enumerating whatever other merits I might be supposed to possess, informed them that I was the brother of an earl ; but those who had not this good fortune were roughly handled. At that time, it must be remembered, civilian fears were not very acute. But after such raids as are now to be expected, the mob will turn upon every possible object of hate within reach : pacifists, the police, airmen, the Government, lorries and trucks containing food (which will be rumoured to be hoarded), and so on and so on. Unless their fury can be restrained, looting and

brigandage and murder for food will make the situation far worse than enemy gas alone could make it.

We now suppose—what seems scarcely probable—that our methods of coping with civilian disorder have proved more efficient than those of the Nazis, and that we have “won” the war. As soon as there is an armistice, fear will cease, the authorities, having achieved “victory”, will become popular, and the rage generated by past fear will all be directed against the enemy. It will be agreed (if Germany is the enemy) that the Treaty of Versailles was regrettably lenient. What will be done I do not know ; but it will be savage and terrible. The civilian population will be brutalized ; its sole desire will be for vengeance, and it will willingly leave all power in the hands of the armed forces. The English have been, on the whole, rather more kindly and easy-going than most nations, and the reason for this has been their immunity from invasion. After the next war, if they are victorious, their character will be changed and they will be cruel and ruthless. If they are defeated, their character will also be changed, but in a different way : they will lose self-respect, becoming sycophantic and sly. In neither event will the great war against Fascism have achieved any valuable result.

For the Fascists, the argument is different. A man who believes in Fascism enough to be willing to die for it, and even to risk his country for it, can quite logically advocate a great war, since it is very probable that, whichever group is victorious, his cause will prosper. A Communist may support war, provided he is one of those who have no objection to a military dictatorship so long as the officers belong to the Third International. But no man who dislikes military dictatorships can rationally hope to secure the victory of his cause by means of war ; if it is to be victorious, it must be by other methods.

The reader, I am sure, will find this conclusion, as I do myself, an exceedingly unpleasant one—so unpleasant, in fact, that he will no doubt do everything in his power to avoid accepting it. He has, it seems to me, three lines of defence. First, he may try to find flaws in the argument. He may say that, if the opponents of Fascism have a much larger air force than its friends have, they will be able to win the war before very serious damage has been inflicted on their own civilians. He may say that in the Fascist countries themselves there is enough underground Socialism and Communism to produce mutiny and sabotage in the event of war. He may say that the horrors of the war will produce

a revulsion, not of hatred of the enemy, but of determination to be done with war for ever. If all such arguments are refuted, he may fall back on instinct, and say that it is intolerable not to help our friends, for instance in Spain, and that it is a coward's part to count the cost. Finally, he may say that it is better to die defending the right, however unsuccessfully, than to live, a submissive slave, in the world which must result if the pacifist argument is accepted. I have every sympathy with the man who urges these reasons against renouncing war ; indeed, I have urged them to myself a thousand times. Nevertheless, I find my reason convinced, however instinct may protest, that war, as it has now become, is not a method by which any good thing can be preserved. I do not think, however, that we must acquiesce passively in every evil thing that violent men may seek to impose. There are, I think, methods other than war by which we may seek to promote what we believe to be good ; and these methods may involve quite as much individual heroism as is called for in war. Of them, however, I do not yet wish to speak. For the present, I wish to examine the above arguments against the pacifist position.

There is first the argument that we may be so superior in the air as to make victory swift and our

own losses small. This suffers from the usual fallacy of the advocates of armaments : it forgets that, whatever we do, the potential enemy will take corresponding measures. We are, at the moment, increasing our armed forces as fast as we can, but obviously, if Germany and Italy regard us as possible enemies, they will be provoked by our action into a reciprocal increase. If, relying on our greater wealth, we hope to reach a point where the financial burden will be too great for them, the only result will be to precipitate a war as soon as they feel that point is being approached. And meanwhile the increase of armaments stimulates militarism, fear, and the expectation of war. Moreover, it is an accepted principle of air strategy that even a great superiority in the air affords little protection against raids ; the danger to London, for instance, depends upon the strength of the enemy forces, not upon the balance between their forces and ours. Ours can endanger the enemy's territory, but cannot protect our own.

The argument that, in Germany and Italy, there will be mutiny and sabotage in the event of war, is one which may become true after much destruction in those countries by air raids, but is not at all likely to be true at the outbreak of the war. At first, the gravity of the situation is likely to produce

an almost perfect solidarity with the Government ; for gas is purely geographical in its operation, and will kill German communists just as much as Nazis if they happen to be in the area which it infects. All alike, therefore, will be equally concerned in national defence. It is only after disasters have made the Government unpopular that disaffection is to be expected, and then it will take the form of a demand for peace. But this is to be expected equally in all countries exposed to gas attack.

The hope that the horrors of the war will produce, not hatred of the enemy, but a demand for measures to insure permanent peace, is one which can hardly be entertained by anyone who remembers the months immediately following the armistice. The opportunity existed then for statesmanlike measures to prevent future wars, and President Wilson did his best to secure them. But his own country threw him over ; Great Britain, in a General Election, showed that it only wanted to "hang the Kaiser" and "make Germany pay" ; France thought only of measures to restrain the Germans from fighting, while doing nothing to prevent others from going to war. Propaganda had taught that Germany was the villain of the piece, and it was thought that to destroy *German* militarism was to destroy militarism. Those who had lost sons or husbands in the war,

with few exceptions, were led by their grief to hatred of Germany, not of war. The wrong diagnosis of the causes of the war—namely the attribution of sole guilt to Germany—led to a wrong view as to the measures required to prevent war : it was thought that if only Germany was disarmed and impoverished all would be well. The whole of this tragic mistake is certain to be repeated if we win another war against Germany, but in a more extreme form, both because the war will have been more terrible and because it will be argued that Germany was not sufficiently punished last time. In an atmosphere of hysteria and hatred it is impossible to induce nations to adopt the measures—such as the internationalizing of the air forces—which are necessary for the establishment of a secure peace.

As for the argument that it is intolerable not to help our friends, and that it is a coward's part to count the cost : if we could really help our friends, and if the cost fell only upon ourselves, the argument would have great force. But if, by trying to help them, we shall only involve them in worse disaster, and if the cost falls not only upon ourselves, but upon civilian populations in general, and, what is more, upon the ideals for which we are fighting, then our help, however well-meaning,

becomes misguided. As for cowardice : I do not propose that the pacifist shall sit still and do nothing while everything that he values is destroyed, but I propose that he should adopt methods other than war, which, though they *may* fail, have at least some chance of success, and which, though they do not involve fighting, may well involve just as much danger to the individual pacifist.

Finally : “ It is better to die defending the right than to live, a submissive slave, in a world of tyranny and war.” Certainly it would be pleasanter to die than to do nothing ; but that is not the alternative. When it is argued that war cannot be destroyed by war, it is not conceded that nothing can be done against war. We who hate war must not so far yield to the warmongers as to believe that they can only be opposed by their own methods. There are things that we can do, which will make it better to live than to die, but gassing civilians is not one of them. What it is that we can do, I shall try to make clear in later Chapters. It is not necessary to feel impotent : it is only necessary to believe that war is not the sole force by which the lot of men is determined, and to remember that our potential enemies are human beings like ourselves.

Pacifism as a National Policy



WE HAVE EXAMINED A NUMBER OF POSSIBLE POLICIES, and have found objections to them all. It remains to consider pacifism as a policy. I am not considering it as a principle, to be deduced from Christ's teaching or from the categorical imperative ; I am thinking of it as a course of action recommended, in certain circumstances, by considerations of practical common sense.

Pacifism may be complete or partial. It is partial if it means refusal to fight on some occasions when there is considerable provocation, but not on all such occasions. Isolationism is, in this sense, a partial pacifism. The United States will not fight in defence of the Kellog Pact, but will fight for the Monroe Doctrine. We might be willing to surrender Gibraltar or Tanganyika rather than fight, and yet be willing to defend the territory of Great Britain against invasion. Every form of partial pacifism has the merit of diminishing the number of possible

casus belli, but it may have the disadvantage of leading ultimately to a war more difficult than it need have been. Suppose, for example, our policy were only to defend our own territory, we might find ourselves invaded from just across the Channel, and without allies, when, by fighting sooner, we might have had allies and have kept our enemies at a greater distance. This is the argument for the defence of Belgium. In some such way, every form of partial pacifism breaks down. If we are to defend our own soil efficiently, we need allies, a complicated foreign policy, and a willingness to go to war about issues that do not directly concern us. I shall, therefore, say no more about partial pacifism, but consider only the complete form, which says that in no imaginable circumstances will we go to war with another civilized State.

We who are accustomed to the outlook of a Great Power, require a considerable mental effort to imagine how, on such terms, any tolerable existence can be possible. Yet this is in fact, if not in form, the position of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. For the sake of definiteness, let us consider only Denmark. No one in that country contemplates forcible resistance to Germany, although the Nazis are detested and there is a Socialist majority. The Danes know that, whatever efforts they might make, they could not even

the purposes of this discussion, are to be regarded as independent States.) Without force, we should lose it all : Gibraltar, Malta, the Suez Canal, Aden, the oil of Southern Persia, India, and Hong Kong ; Kenya, Nigeria, and Jamaica—places which minister to the pride of all of us and the pockets of a favoured few. It would, of course, be unwise to let our loss just happen, since the scramble would probably produce a war. But we could give self-government to India, and hand over our African possessions to an international authority,¹ while

¹ This suggestion would, of course, require to be carefully worked out if it were to be successfully put into operation. I am not proposing that our Colonies should be given to separate Powers under mandates, but that they should be administered from Geneva (supposing a reformed League to be the international authority in question). The present administrators should be continued at first, and should not be removed so long as they gave satisfaction to the League ; but new men, as they were required, should be selected at Geneva by some completely impartial method such as competitive examination. There should be no tariff discrimination among members of the League, and there should be complete equality among them as regards the investment of capital in the former British possessions. Any Power subsequently becoming a member of the League should *ipso facto* acquire the same privileges in these respects as every other State member. The continuance of the existing administration to begin with would give time for the League to develop the administrative machinery required for the discharge of its new responsibilities.

Jamaica could be sold to the United States for a good round sum. Some capitalists, with investments in Crown Colonies, would lose money, but, as the income tax could be halved, even capitalists would gain on the whole.¹ Having no longer large armed forces, we should threaten no one, and no one would have any motive to make war on us. All the nightmare horrors that we have been considering in earlier chapters would still threaten the nations that continued to play the game of power, but we should be liberated, and our energies could be devoted to purposes worthy of sane men.

When disarmament is suggested, it is natural to imagine that foreign conquest would inevitably follow, and would be accompanied by all the horrors that characterize warlike invasions. This is a mistake, as the example of Denmark shows. Probably, if we had neither armaments nor Empire, foreign States would let us alone. If they did not, we should have to yield without fighting, and we should therefore not arouse their ferocity. The consequences, both to ourselves and to the world, would be infinitely less terrible than the consequences of a war, even if it ended in complete victory.

¹ The question of the economic value of the Empire will be considered again in a later chapter.

Unilateral disarmament is usually spoken of as a visionary's dream, and regarded with contempt as an endeavour to treat the Sermon on the Mount as applicable to real life. The argument by which we have been led to advocate it has been at no point visionary, nor has it made any appeal for heroic self-sacrifice ; it has been an argument of common sense, invoking only such considerations as sensible people use in their daily life. Stripped of all in-essentials, the argument is this : If you, at great expense, prepare the means of killing large numbers of other people, they will certainly, unless they have been convinced by our argument, make equal preparations to kill you. They will, feeling themselves innocent, consider you wicked on account of your preparations ; you, convinced that you intended only self-defence, will think them wicked. Each side will become persuaded that the other side is capable of a treacherous attack, and will therefore become itself capable of the very thing that it suspects. But if, suddenly, you declare that the whole thing has been a folly, and that you are prepared to be defenceless and trust to luck, the other people, having no longer any reason to fear you, will cease to hate you, and will lose all incentive to attack you. Of this there is abundant evidence. Norway and Sweden have been at peace since 1814 :

Denmark since 1864. What comparable record have the Great Powers secured by their armies and navies ?

It is war, more than anything else, that makes nations disagreeable. The faults of the French in international affairs are mainly caused by the German invasions of 1870 and 1914. What we dislike about the Nazis is, psychologically, an outcome of war, and we shall become like them if we fight them. Conversely, if we boldly refuse the method of war, the motives for a swash-buckling mentality on the part of our potential enemies are diminished. There is in France a powerful movement in favour of complete pacifism, which lately secured a majority at a congress of school-teachers ; it is based upon such considerations as I have adduced. Suppose England and France were both to disarm. If the Nazis endeavoured to continue their military parades and their glorification of war they would cease to look heroic and would become ridiculous ; their own compatriots would begin to laugh at them, and to reflect that so much strenuousness was no longer called for. Is it not clear that this is the really effective way of fighting militarism ? War is brutal and horrible, but seems to be ennobled by the fact that the warrior risks his life. If no one resists, the heroism is gone ; if

the brutality survives, it can no longer command admiration, while all the fine talk becomes laughable.

To combat successfully what we dislike in the militarist attitude is not a military problem, but a psychological one. The attitude existed in the Mongols who conquered China, but in a generation the conquerors had come to prefer the civilized way of life of the defeated nation. The same thing happened when the Mohammedans invaded the Eastern Empire, and in many other instances. The present lust for military glory in Germany is an outcome of humiliation, defeat, and poverty ; satisfied pride would leave room for more civilized desires. It must be remembered that, if we do not fight, our civilization will not suffer the degradation and disintegration inevitable in modern war, and will not be viewed with hostility by the Germans. The attractiveness of a life given to more interesting things than mere physical power cannot fail to have the kind of influence that it has often had in the past ; and what is harsh and silly in the Nazi philosophy is more likely to be overcome in this way than by even the most victorious war.

There would, I think, almost certainly be a complete change in the character of the German

Government, if the fear of foreign enemies were removed. For a time, the present persecuting creed might nominally persist, but there would be little objection to British Communists, Socialists, or pacifists, since they would be regarded as having caused the military weakness of Germany's former enemies, and would be encouraged as Lenin was when the Kaiser's Government facilitated his return to Russia. Certainly, however, nothing critical of Germany would be tolerated in speech or in print, and at first, the situation might be unpleasant and very galling to our pride. If our pacifism broke down under the provocation, tyranny might become a settled system. But if we refrained from force and violence, I do not think it can be doubted that the mood of the Germans would change. It is difficult to remain fierce when there is no occasion of fear or envy, and when pride has been fully gratified. A great civilized nation, in the absence of all stimulus to hatred, cannot long remain in the mood that has put the Nazis in power. With the fear of war removed, bullying would soon lose its charm, and a liberal outlook would become common. To think otherwise is to attribute to original sin faults which are in fact attributable to the Treaty of Versailles.

If, by a turn of the wheel, the French should become our most probable enemies, the same arguments would apply : so long as our armaments caused them to fear for their own safety they would hate us, but if we disarmed they would no longer have any reason to wish us ill.

What is it that stands in the way? Three things : fear, pride, and greed. We see masses of men excited by contest and danger, driven to ferocity by combat and the deaths of comrades, and we say to ourselves : that is what these men are, and we can never submit to be in their power. But the very same men, in quiet times, are no worse than anybody else. Fear of being conquered in war is rational ; after all, we know what was done to the Germans after their defeat. But who among us would have inflicted such sufferings upon them if there had been no war? In most civilized men, resistance is necessary to arouse ferocity. If we were to disarm, therefore, we should not have the same reason to fear what foreign armies would do to us. On the other hand, if we do not disarm it is highly probable that we shall suffer all the horrors of attack from the air, with no better consolation than that the enemy will suffer in like manner. Fear, therefore, in so far as it is rational and not a

mere unreasoning terror, should promote unilateral disarmament.

Pride is a more difficult matter. We all desire, as far as possible, to direct our own lives, and most of us like to direct those of others also. So long as we remain a Great Power, we can congratulate ourselves upon our influence in the world, and tell ourselves that Britons never, never, never will be slaves. If we had no armed forces, we might have to obey the orders of a foreign government, which we should feel to be humiliating; we should no longer be able to govern "natives", and we should have to take a back seat in international affairs. But if we could educate our pride, if we could learn to feel more desire to lead the world towards sanity and peace than to own vast territories, we might come to feel more satisfaction in being the first to disarm than we ever felt in having the greatest Empire in the world. All that is needed is to substitute a civilized standard of values for the primitive lust of dominion.

Last of our trio of passions comes greed. We derive money—those of us who are lucky—from the gold mines of Rhodesia and the Transvaal, from Indian jute, the oil of Persia, and the rubber of the Straits Settlements. Our economic system

is intimately bound up with our Empire, and loss of territory will infallibly involve some loss of income. But the loss will be tiny compared to the cost of a war. The cost of the next war will not, like that of the last, be mainly confined to the expense of the armed forces and the munitions ; there will be widespread destruction, some of it very difficult to make good, and the nation's energies will be so depleted that the work of restoration will take a long time. From the point of view of the national wealth, disarmament and complete pacifism is indisputably the wisest policy.

I conclude, then, that every argument, both national and international, every consideration of self-interest and every hope of producing greater sanity in the world, is in favour of the policy of gradually disbanding the army and navy and air force, disposing of India and the Crown Colonies, and announcing that we intend never again to fight another war. This policy is simple, straightforward, and intelligible ; it gives hope for our own country, and an example which others may follow. No other policy gives any reasonable chance of escaping utter and terrible disaster, but only, at best, of inflicting equal disaster on others. Along the old lines, war will not be prevented ; if we wish to avoid a horror to which there has

been nothing equal in the past, we must have the courage to have a policy as novel as the strategy of air attack. And in disarming we shall be doing the best, not only for our own country, but for Europe, for the world, and for the future of mankind.

NOTE TO CHAPTER VIII

One of the difficulties of neutrality as regards the affairs of the Continent is our dependence on imported food, which makes us amenable to pressure from those who are in a position to threaten our trade routes. If we were to attempt seriously to adopt a policy of neutrality, we should do well to develop our domestic food production, which could be done much more easily than is usually supposed. Two things are necessary, first, the utilization of all suitable land, and second, the application of science to increased production per acre. The former would require a curtailment of pheasant preserving, grouse moors, and deer forests. What is possible in the way of increased production per acre is known to students of agricultural chemistry, but is, as yet, little realized by anyone else. I do not think it can be doubted that, by the application of existing knowledge, Great Britain could, within ten years, become capable of producing the amount of food necessary to support life for its own population. Examples of the possibilities of scientific agriculture are described in the following article in *The New Republic* for June 3, 1936 :

“Dr. O. W. Willcox has for some years been writing books about the new science of “Agrobiology”, which makes possible enormous increases in productivity of the soil through new technical methods. Some of his predictions have been criticized, by Secretary Wallace among other people, as being excessive. Striking confirmation of Dr. Willcox’s general theory now comes from California in the form of a report by Dr. W. F. Gericke,

associate plant physiologist of the University of California. Dr. Gericke has been growing tomato plants fifteen feet high and tobacco twenty feet high. He has produced 217 tons of tomatoes per acre and has grown 2,465 bushels of potatoes—against a United States average at present of 116 bushels. Many other vegetables have responded similarly, and striking results have also been achieved with flowers.

“Under Dr. Gericke’s method, plants are not set into the earth at all. Shallow tanks are filled with a liquid composed of ten chemicals, all of them readily available in commerce, and this liquid is heated by electricity or otherwise. Over the tanks is spread a wire screen covered with straw, excelsior or moss, in which the seeds are planted, thrusting their roots down into the liquid below. The growth takes place in unheated greenhouses or, in the proper season, out of doors. The products of this process are of high quality, and in the case of tobacco it is possible to avoid the rankness that sometimes accompanies rapid growth under natural conditions. That this plan is not a toy of the laboratory is shown by the fact that tomatoes produced under Dr. Gericke’s method are now being sold on the Californian market, at normal prices and at a commercial profit.

“Forty years ago, H. G. Wells wrote a scientific romance, *The Food of the Gods*, in which he predicted a development of this sort, which changed the whole structure of society. He may yet live to see his prediction come true, for possibilities of these new agricultural techniques seem almost boundless. Already we are hearing stories of an occasional scientist who is said to grow a year’s supply of potatoes for a large family in a tin pan under the kitchen

table. It is possible to envisage all the vegetable goods for a huge New York apartment house being produced in a small space on the roof—unless, indeed, food became so cheap and so easy to produce that everyone moved to the country. There is as a matter of fact no especial reason why we should not have skyscraper farms, on which the rows of shallow pans would be stacked one above the other to the height of a hundred—or a thousand—feet, and reached by elevators. What such a development would do to 5,000,000 farm families, and to the millions of other persons who get their livelihood from the present agricultural economy, is a vista as exciting as it is terrifying. Certainly, the California experiments bring us one step nearer to that famous “economy of abundance”, and make it still more absurd that millions of people should continue to go hungry.”

CHAPTER NINE

Some Warlike Fallacies



BEFORE PROCEEDING FURTHER, I WISH TO REPEAT, for fear of misunderstanding, the limitations to which my own pacifism is subject. I am not a believer in the doctrine of non-resistance ; I do not desire the abolition of the police ; I do not hold that war is always and everywhere a crime. If an international government existed, and were possessed of the only legally permitted armed forces, I should be prepared to support it in suppressing rebellions, since I should regard this as the only means of making peace secure. The evil of war is quantitative, and a small war for a great end may do more good than harm. My belief in absolute pacifism is limited to the present time, and depends upon the destructiveness of air warfare. In other times and other circumstances I should be prepared to consider gains and losses,

and to concede that war *might* be worth while. Even in our own day, I am not prepared always to condemn *civil* war ; the Spanish Government is obviously right to resist its rebels. What I assert is that wars between civilized States, at the present time, are sure to do more harm than would be done by the peaceful submission of one side, and, further, that the actual harm which a nation would suffer through unilateral disarmament is very much less than most people suppose. On this ground, I advocate the gradual disbanding of the British army, navy and air force. If I were French, I should advocate the same for France ; if German, for Germany, so long as I remained outside a concentration camp. I do not wish, however, to see the world governed for ever by fierce military dictators, and I may be told that only first-class wars can prevent this. Such a view seems to me mistaken, and due to a frame of mind that tends to promote war. I want, in this chapter, even at the cost of some repetition, to examine some of the arguments in favour of war, and to give reasons for thinking them invalid at the present time.

We are often told that our own country is so virtuous that its armed forces would never be used to promote war, and therefore every increase in

our strength is an added safeguard to peace. This is, nominally, not an argument for war, but its effect, nevertheless, is to promote war. I observe that it is being used by Hitler to justify the two years' service law : Germany, he says, wants only justice, and if she is too strong to be attacked there will be no war. The French and Russians, however, are unconvinced. If we had been stronger, we should, very likely, have gone to war with Italy about Abyssinia. It is true that, if we had been *much* stronger, we might have prevented Mussolini from attacking Abyssinia ; but if there had been an approximate equality of force, we should have only provoked a general war. And in an armaments race great superiority is practically impossible. No nation, moreover, is as virtuous as it seems to itself, and no nation can be trusted to use its armed forces solely for peace. It is only thirty-four years since the end of the Boer War, which was quite as unjustifiable as the recent Italian adventure. It is true that we have since become more virtuous, but only because we have grown less powerful. If we could recover our former strength, we should no doubt be as imperialistic as ever, though we might adopt some new disguise. Nationalism is capable of the strangest forms : in Russia, I found it argued that

Russian patriotism is justifiable because the Soviet State is the only one that is truly international. In one way or another, national pride will assert itself if it can. If we grow stronger, our policy will become bolder, and we shall drive neutrals into the opposite camp. So long as the present international anarchy continues, Europe will tend to divide itself into two equal parties, and the only effect of increase in our armaments will be to alter the line of division. The policy of Poland, at the moment, affords an illustration of this natural law.

A very common form of nationalism masquerading as philanthropy is the view that we confer great benefits on our possessions, and that it is our duty to their inhabitants to prevent them from falling into the hands of less virtuous nations. I have sometimes, in addressing audiences mainly composed of Socialists, suggested that we should hand over our Crown Colonies in Africa to an international authority, but I have been met by a storm of opposition, and have been told that we ought not to part with them without their consent. The obvious reply, that we had acquired them without their consent, took people by surprise, but failed to convince; for was it not obvious that African tribes *must* prefer us to any one else?

Does not every one know that we are the best colonists? No doubt the same suggestion, made in any other country as regards its colonies, would have provoked exactly the same reaction. The belief of each nation in its own pre-eminent virtue is one of the difficulties of the situation, and must remain a difficulty so long as there is no impartial super-national authority to pronounce an unbiassed verdict. Whoever wishes to be, so far as his influence extends, a force for peace rather than war, must learn to overcome national prejudice, and to admit that the virtue or wickedness of every nation, including his own, depends almost entirely upon opportunity.

Even if it be true that the British administration of African possessions is better than that of some other Powers, this affords no reason for any policy making a first-class war more probable. The destruction which such a war would cause in Europe is obviously a much graver matter than a somewhat worse government of parts of Africa. Moreover, a war might easily lead to the loss of our colonies, and, if it did not, would make us so much more fierce that our present merits as imperialists would disappear. If, therefore, any sacrifice that we can make as regards the Crown Colonies would tend to prevent war, we ought

not to be deterred from making it by belief in our superior virtue towards the negroes.

The argument which does more than anything else to involve us in wars is that "our turn will come next". In 1914, the Germans hoped for a purely continental war, but we were persuaded that, if they won, they would attack us next. At the present moment, a very similar situation exists. The Germans would like to be let alone while they attack Russia, but the French believe that this is only a preface to the conquest of France, and many of us are convinced that the subjection of France would be only a prelude to that of England.. I am not concerned to deny that some such scheme may exist in the minds of certain Nazis ; but what is to come is always uncertain, and it is unwise to incur very terrible evils now on the chance of their perhaps preventing quite doubtful evils in some not very near future. Napoleon attacked Russia as a step towards the conquest of England ; perhaps Hitler would find a similar policy equally disastrous. Perhaps, on the other hand, after a successful campaign against Russia, the Germans would feel satisfied and grow less warlike. Perhaps, if this did not happen, the United States might be roused to prevent further conquests. Even at the worst, it would be less

disastrous to permit German domination than to destroy Germany, France and England in a really scientific war. But without invoking this argument, the mere uncertainty as to the course of events is a sufficient reason for abstaining from prudential wars based upon the very doubtful contention that "our turn will come next". The policy inspired by this fear, in addition to the drawback of precipitating wars which otherwise might never occur, has the disadvantage that it makes every war almost world-wide, since it draws allies to both sides equally until no one able and willing to fight is left out.

One reason for war is our own virtue ; another is the wickedness of some other nation. Nelson taught his midshipmen to "hate a Frenchman as they would the devil", but after Trafalgar and Waterloo there was no longer any occasion for hostility to France, and contempt took its place. Russia, which was supposed to threaten India, became the next bogey, until the German navy turned our fears in a new direction. We then discovered that Germany, with a Parliament elected by manhood suffrage, was an autocracy, whereas Russia, through the possession of a mystical entity called the "Slav soul", was, in some transcendental sense, the embodiment of true

liberalism. The Russian Revolution might have been regarded as a confirmation of this view, but the defeat of Germany made it again permissible to hate Russia. Now, two equally melodramatic views divide British opinion : some think still that the Russians are devils, and are inclined to regard the Nazis as fine fellows, while others reverse the roles. It is a cruel dilemma, for, while Russian doctrines threaten our incomes, German practice threatens our Empire. For a patriotic plutocrat, the situation is most painful.

The belief that some other nation is wicked springs always from some real or fancied danger to our own interests, for which we regard the nation in question as responsible. Sometimes, it is true, an enemy nation is regarded as ridiculous rather than wicked. When I was young, the French ate frogs and were called "froggies", but they apparently abandoned this practice when we concluded our entente with them in 1904—at any rate, I have never heard it mentioned since that date. Ridicule, however, is less common than moral reprobation combined with bitter hatred and vilification. When it suits our interests to treat some nation badly, we discover that it consists of bullies, who understand no argument but force, and are totally unable to face "cold steel". (This

was still said during the Great War, but I suppose next time some less anachronistic phrase will have to be invented.) It is argued that the nation in question must be “taught a lesson”; we must be “stern” and “have done with rose-water sentimentalities”; if we are at once militant and religious, we say that we must make ourselves the ministers of Divine justice. When we feared that the Russians would conquer India, we told each other how fond they were of the knout; when we wanted to take the gold mines from the Boers, we became impressed with their cruelty to black men; when we were fighting the Germans, we filled the whole world with stories of their atrocities. In each case, simple-minded people, who did not understand how these things work, became persuaded that the nation designated as the enemy really was quite exceptionally wicked. Horror increased fear, and fear increased horror, until hysteria made ordinary men and women credulous, and even imaginative. Our own side, meantime, became more and more angelic. Everyone thinks of the enemy as people who kill, and of our own soldiers as people who face death: the one is brutal, the other heroic. It is remarkable that the relatives of soldiers always speak of their being “ready to die for their

country ” and never of their being “ ready to kill for their country ”, although it is hoped that they may kill without dying. Any one who will take the trouble to look up a newspaper published during the Great War will be amazed by the hot flame of insanity, melodrama, and ferocious tribal morality that leaps from its lurid pages. It seems surprising that, at the time, we were able to take all this seriously. But in milder forms the same sort of passions produce the same kind of false beliefs whenever, in peace time, some other nation rouses our fear or cupidity ; and if we are to avoid the moods that lead to war, we must be critical of all incentives to special hatred of some one nation.

I do not mean to suggest that no atrocities occur, nor do I deny that most nations that we might have reason to wish to fight have done abominable things. But exactly the same thing is true of nations with which we wish to be allied, and even of ourselves. It is selection, even more than deliberate invention, that gives rise to false impressions. Most English people, when they hear of Chicago, at once think of gangsters, because, of all the inhabitants of that city, it is they who most interest the newspapers. But if we were to go to war with Chicago in order to wipe out

gangsterism, we should be acting idiotically. Everyone can see this, because no British interest would be served by a war on the Great Lakes, and because we are not afraid that Al Capone will lead an army to attack us. If we were, we should soon forget that 999 out of 1000 Chicagoans are ordinary law-abiding people. And yet how easy it would be to make out a case against ourselves! Suppose some foreigner were to make a report, in his own country, of all the murders, frauds, assaults, cruelties to children, etc., mentioned in our newspapers during one year, and were to represent this as an accurate chronicle of English life, he would lead many ignorant readers to imagine us a nation almost wholly addicted to crime. Or—to take a more serious example—if a German were to write an account of our rule in India, he would easily establish, to the satisfaction of Germans, that our love of democracy is humbug, that our objection to imprisonment without trial is hypocrisy, and that our dislike of police cruelty exists only when the police concerned are not our own. I do not say that all this would be just, but it would be no more unjust than the view that many British anti-Fascists have of Germany. The fact in each case is that the general public does not know what is done.

Economic fallacies play a considerable part in the promotion of war. I do not deny that, when a country is victorious, some of its citizens are enriched. There are, to begin with, the armament firms ; their interest in war is obvious, and their sinister activities are becoming notorious. Many of these were recently exposed by a Senate inquiry in the United States, but the British public, as far as possible, was hindered from knowing what had been discovered in the way of intrigues to prevent disarmament by encouraging suspicions between nations. But there are other more reputable types of business which may derive advantages from the result of a war. The construction of roads, bridges and railways in Crown Colonies gives contracts to firms in the mother country, and every kind of development gives opportunities for the investment of capital. Every enlargement of the market makes cheaper methods of mass production possible ; and in every industry which has reached the form of a monopoly, the advantages of cheaper production can be retained wholly by the producer. Valuable raw materials can be acquired by conquest, and may give rise to vast industries which, otherwise, would exist only in foreign countries. Every Crown Colony, moreover, affords employment for a number of officials.

In these and various other ways, conquered territory promotes the wealth of certain individuals, to whom, therefore, wars of conquest or of defence appear economically advantageous, and pacifism a pestilential heresy.

But when we consider the nation as a whole, the balance sheet is very different. I do not deny that *some* wars have paid—for example, when we fought Lobengula, and won a fabulous booty of gold and diamonds. But such cases are rare. Few territories are either as rich as Lobengula's or as easy to conquer, and certainly none such can now be acquired without fighting a civilized Power. We must, therefore, include in the expense of our possessions all that we spend on our armed forces in addition to what is necessary for home defence, and all that we have spent on war since the Spanish Armada, which was our last genuinely defensive war. We must include also all the expense of administration, and all the loss at home owing to the employment of able men in distant parts of the earth's surface. When all these items are taken into account, the economic advantages of war will be seen to be merely individual, not national.

But, some will say, is it not a grand thing to ruin our competitors? During the Great War, I

met people (not in asylums) who thought we should all be richer at the end, because we should have destroyed German trade ; and yet, after the War, the City nearly ruined itself in the attempt to restore German trade.

It is a curious fact that Marxists are among those who most exaggerate the economic advantages of empire. This is a part of their indictment of capitalism, which, they maintain, depends upon a continually expanding market, and is therefore forced into imperialist wars. The truth is, I think, that it is certain interests that profit by empire, not national capital as a whole. The fact that there are prosperous countries which have no empire at all is otherwise inexplicable. I have suggested that even Great Britain, which is more dependent upon empire than any other country, could gain by sacrificing foreign possessions and thereby saving the expense of defending them. Before you deny this, I suggest that you examine our overseas trade, and find out what percentage goes to India and the Crown Colonies ; that you make what estimates you can of the profits of this percentage ; and that you then balance it against our expenditure on the debt and on armaments, remembering that, if we had no empire, the motives for attacking us would almost disappear,

and we should have little need for armaments. You will find that our exports to India and the Crown Colonies are about a third of our total exports, and about two-thirds of our expenditure on the debt services and the armed forces. The profit on exports to India and the Crown Colonies may be taken as the profit of empire, while the cost of the debt and the war services represents the loss. It is not because of this profit-and-loss account that I advocate pacifism; but if an economic argument is advanced on the other side, it is as well to know how completely fallacious it is.

Another argument, exactly contrary to the above, is advanced in favour of war, sometimes by the very same people. It is said that war leads men to forget economic self-interest, and to put a heroic idealism in its place. To quote Tennyson on the Crimean War :

I wake to the higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames.

This is part of the official philosophy of Fascists and Nazis. Mussolini says :

“Fascism . . . believes neither in the possibility nor in the utility of perpetual peace. It thus repudiates the doctrine of Pacifism—born of

a renunciation of the struggle and an act of cowardice in the face of sacrifice. War alone brings up to its highest tension all human energy and puts the stamp of nobility upon the peoples who have the courage to meet it. All other trials are substitutes, which never really put men into the position where they have to make the great decision—the alternative of life or death. Thus a doctrine which is founded upon this harmful postulate of peace is hostile to Fascism.”

And Herr von Papen says: “Germany, on January 30th, 1933, struck out the word pacifism from its vocabulary.”

This glorification of war is now repudiated among ourselves, but at the outbreak of the Great War the immense majority of the clergy in every belligerent country took exactly Mussolini’s view; and so they did in the United States as soon as that country declared war.¹ The Bishop of London, for example, stated that “War brings out all that is best in our men.” If we had gone to war about Abyssinia, we should again have been told by many official guardians of morality that we were putting heroic virtue before ignoble ease. It is easy to ridicule the idealism connected with war,

¹ See *Preacher’s Present Arms*, by Ray H. Abrams, New York, 1933.

especially when expressed by men whose profession exempts them from fighting ; but it has its roots rather deep in human nature, and must be seriously examined by pacifists if they are to hope to be effective.

Ethical ideals are of various kinds, and derive their persuasiveness from appeals to various passions. Christ's appeal is to love : "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". If you genuinely and profoundly obey this precept, you will feel a great dislike of violence, though you will not, in my opinion, repudiate it completely—you will not, for instance, refuse to protect a weaker individual from a stronger one, if you happen to be present when an assault is committed. From this it is a logical step to support of the police, in so far as their function is to prevent private violence. Exactly where to draw the line is a difficult question, but at any rate it cannot logically be maintained, by any one who accepts Christ's principle, that war is in itself glorious and peace ignoble. This view, though it has been held by many Christians, has quite other psychological sources. There have been many cruel ethical codes. Those who, from respect for tradition, have accepted such codes with reluctance, may have had no corresponding cruelty in their natures ; but those

who originate cruel doctrines, and those who exult in them, do so because they have cruel impulses for which they wish to find an outlet compatible with respectability. Sometimes, the cruelty involved is not a matter of impulse, but an outcome of love of power : if men submit, they may be kindly treated, but if not they must be made to suffer. Love of power combines very easily with the types of morality that are called " stern ". Sin, it is said, must be punished ; what *we* want is virtue ; therefore we do right in making our opponents suffer. Only a moderate degree of self-deception is required to make this argument seem cogent to a man who believes that he accepts Christ's teaching. " Love your neighbour ", considered as a command to feel a certain emotion, enjoins something not within the power of the will. If you do not have the emotion, but wish to act as if you had, you will persuade yourself that pain purifies, and that severity is the truest kindness. It is in this way that nominal Christians can allow themselves to exult in the punishment of sinners.

But many of those who praise war do not even nominally accept the Christian ethical teaching, but, following Nietzsche, reject it as " slave morality ". They hold that the mass of mankind

do not deserve consideration on their own account ; whether they suffer or are happy should be a matter of indifference. The man who counts is the hero. The hero is masterful, ruthless, courageous, and far-sighted ; he is a leader of men, never mean or petty, but habitually despotic. Obviously there will be great competition for the post of official "hero", and victory will go to the most masterful and the most ruthless. The greater the amount of bloodshed involved, the more "heroic" is the man who emerges master at the end of it. Peace is ignoble because it gives no scope for the qualities that make a hero ; only endless war can keep these qualities perpetually alive.

This whole outlook is obviously a rationalization of the love of power, combined, as a rule, with some love of cruelty for its own sake. In Carlyle and Nietzsche, who gave literary form to the doctrine in the modern world, love of power was unsatisfied, and was exacerbated by physical causes. The temperament which finds such a doctrine acceptable is clearly one which has suffered some serious damage, either through unwise or cruel treatment in childhood, or through undeserved economic failure, or through ill-health or some other misfortune. A world in which these teachings find wide acceptance must be one in

which there is appalling political and economic maladjustment. The cure consists, not in arguing against the doctrines, but in removing their causes in poverty and unhappiness.

If the doctrine that the aim of politics should be to give power to heroes were one to be met by rational argument, it would be easily refuted. Through war and military dictatorship it must lead to the extermination of courageous men, and to the establishment of that very régime of cunning scheming slaves which it most abhors. The hero, having made himself master of the State, must set to work to secure his power. This is no longer to be achieved on the battlefield, since his open enemies are vanquished. The men he has to fear are his colleagues, and his dependence must be on spies and secret police. He may, like the Emperor Augustus, fall a prey to the "ignoble dream of perpetual peace", but it will be a peace based on terror, not on consent. When he dies, he is not likely to be succeeded by a Nietzschean hero, but by the most supple intriguer among his sycophants—unless, indeed, his whole system collapses.

Heroism is a valuable quality, but admiration of it cannot be made the basis of a theory of politics. The pacifist, in plain fact, will have more need of heroism during the next war than anyone else,

since he will be equally exposed to enemy gas, and will have in addition to face the hostility of his own people. The Nietzschean hero, on the contrary, may enjoy the glory of exterminating peaceful populations, but at the end of it all he is reduced to the role of a trembling tyrant, living in perpetual dread of assassination, governed by his secret police, and constantly sending to the scaffold innocent people whom his spies accuse to prove their zeal. This is the supposed "hero" after his success. Is he so glorious that all the horrors of modern war are worth enduring in order to produce him?

Conditions for Permanent Peace



TO ABOLISH WAR ALTOGETHER IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE ; indeed, so far as technical considerations are concerned, it is far more possible now than at any former time. It is also more important, since war is a greater menace than it was, and will be a greater menace than it is. The obstacles to the abolition of war are of three kinds, political, economic, and psychological ; all three are serious and cannot be removed quickly. In our present perilous situation, statesmanship must concentrate, for the moment, upon postponing or minimizing war by any method that is possible ; the large measures involved in the establishment of permanent peace cannot be secured at once, and cannot therefore solve our immediate problem. For this reason, I have hitherto said nothing (except briefly in connection with the League of Nations) about any of the

conditions of permanent peace. It is important, however, to realize what they are, if only to prevent inadequate schemes such as President Wilson's from being adopted as complete solutions of the problem.

The political condition for permanent peace (already discussed in Chapter IV) is the existence of a single supreme world government, possessed of irresistible force, and able to impose its will upon any national State or combination of States. It is obvious that, so long as the sovereignty of separate States is unrestricted, war will be liable to occur. It is obvious also, that a merely legal restriction will not suffice ; it must be possible to *compel* obedience to international law. The easiest way to secure this result will be to confine national armed forces to the older weapons, and to make air warfare the exclusive prerogative of the world government. Aeroplanes, civil as well as military, must belong to the international authority. So also must the chemical industry, since national governments must not be able to obtain supplies of poison gas.

Of the civil government of the world State I have already spoken, and I shall say no more here.

No government, whatever preponderance of

force it may possess, will be able to preserve peace indefinitely unless it commands the loyalty of a majority of its subjects, and is able to avoid gross injustice to large sections of the population. This demands some form of political democracy, and also very radical economic changes.

Economic disarmament—as it may be called—requires one essential condition, namely, economic justice. I am glad to find this view asserted, from a purely scientific point of view, by an editorial in *Nature* (August 29, 1936) which says, *inter alia* : “Peace itself is not possible without social justice between nations and between individuals, and only through an equitable organization of the world’s economic life can peace and justice and freedom be made secure”. But if there is to be economic justice, all ultimate ownership and control of land and raw materials must be in the hands of the international authority. This becomes evident as soon as we consider the working of the present system of private property. Suppose oil is found on the land of some farmer, or in a region which has hitherto been left to some uncivilized tribe. What happens? If the discovery is in a civilized country, the farmer is bought out for a sum which makes him rich for life, although he has performed no service to the community ; a

company is formed to exploit the oil ; by various methods of corruption and intrigue, the company becomes amalgamated with others until it has almost, if not quite, a national monopoly ; by arguments concerned with national defence, or by giving blocks of shares to eminent persons, the company secures the support of the national State, which endeavours to secure advantages at the expense of other national States similarly related to other companies. The resulting profits are obtained partly at the expense of the consumer, partly at the expense of the taxpayer. The home consumer has no remedy owing to the monopoly ; the taxpayer, as a rule, does not know what is happening, but when he does he is induced to acquiesce by appeals to his patriotism.

If the region concerned is uncivilized, the procedure is somewhat different. In this case, governmental action is necessary from the beginning, since the first step is to acquire political control of the district concerned. There is a scramble among imperialist Powers, ending in a diplomatic bargain or a war. Then the local tribes have to be dealt with ; sometimes they are simply conquered, sometimes (for instance in the case of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company) their chiefs are given a few shares, accompanied by a first lesson in

finance. After this, development proceeds as in the previous case.

It is obvious that the institution of private property, in regard to raw materials, involves gross injustice and a powerful incentive to war. The injustice and the incentive to war will not be lessened by national Socialism. The oil of Baku is as valuable to Russia as that of Southern Persia is to Great Britain, and either Power will fight to retain possession. Germany, which would have no easy access to oil in war time, is driven into expansionist schemes, or into expensive processes of extracting oil from coal. For such problems Socialism, so long as it is merely national, does nothing to find a remedy. If there is to be complete economic justice, it will be necessary that the profits derived from the mere possession of raw materials (as opposed to the working of them) shall be divided equally among the human race, which is only possible if the ownership is in the hands of the international State. And nothing less than this will remove the incentive to war.

This pre-requisite of permanent peace is one of the most difficult to secure. Even national Socialism, in most countries, is still remote ; but if once established, it will make the next step more difficult, not less. Under capitalism, oil magnates

are objects of envy, and a socialistic agitation against them is politically feasible. But when, as in Russia, the oil belongs to the national State, the whole nation is interested in preventing its transfer to the world State. It will, therefore, be necessary to establish a firm military control by the international force before such a transfer can be effected. We are thus driven to the conclusion that internationalism must be established first in the military sphere, and only at a later stage extended to economic matters.

I have spoken of raw materials, but they are not the only economic assets that will have to be internationalised. Places of commercial and strategic importance, such as the two shores of the Straits of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal, must not belong to any one national State. There must be no protective tariffs, and all harbours must be open to all ships. There must be free mobility of goods by road or rail across the territory of any country.

But none of these matters is as difficult as that of population. It might be suggested that every citizen of the World State should have a right to travel freely and to live wherever he chose. But the United States and the British Dominions would have to change more than is easily imaginable

before they would consent to the Asiatic influx which would result from such freedom. On the other hand, the Japanese, with their high birth-rate, and the Chinese, if they ever become a Great Power, will resent exclusion from the empty regions of Australia, and will ask with what justice they are prevented from replenishing the dwindling population of Western Europe. Perhaps a great excess of births over deaths will have to be adjudged a national offence, and unduly fertile nations will be compelled to submit to instructions in birth control ; for with the lessening of disease and the abolition of war a high birth-rate will become a menace to the economic welfare of mankind.

It may also be hoped that, under a better economic system, race hatred will grow less and at last die out. For whatever may be said to the contrary, the basis of the prejudice against alien races is economic. Those who speak most bitterly against the negro have no objection to coloured servants, or even to coloured nurses for their children ; indeed, the frequency of mulattoes shows that physical toleration extends even further than this. What is disliked and resented is not the presence of negroes, but any claim to equality on their part, and any success in acquiring wealth. The same thing applies to the Chinese ; as com-

petitors in the labour market they are detested, but as servants they are much valued. It seems to follow that, if competition was not to be feared, the prejudice against immigration of coloured races would gradually cease. And under a better economic system, a competent workman would not be depriving competitors of a livelihood, but would be increasing the incomes of collaborators. This problem, therefore, like other economic problems connected with the maintenance of peace, can be solved by international Socialism, but not by anything less radical in the way of economic reform.

In addition to the political and economic conditions for permanent peace, there are psychological conditions that must be fulfilled: education, physical, moral and intellectual, must be such as to prevent the type of character that finds pleasure in war and violence and cruelty, and that consequently, like Treitschke, regards perpetual peace as an "ignoble dream".

If you address an audience of unselected men on the prevention of war, you are sure to come up against the middle-aged man who says, with a sneer: "Wars will never stop; it would be contrary to human nature". It is quite obvious that the man who says this delights in war, and would hate a world from which it had been eliminated.

So long as such characters are common, no political or economic system can make peace secure. After a great war, it may be a generation before the disagreeable aspects of war are forgotten ; but the young men who have been exposed all their lives to their fathers' boasting, and the old men who think their sons have too easy a life, will, in the end, feel that the world is grown tame, and that it is time to show that the race is not degenerating. There will be, of course, an elaborate ideology, but this is merely the intellectualized expression of such passions as are dealt with by morbid psychology : hate, rage, envy, sadism and masochism. If peace is ever to become secure, education must, during a breathing-space, be so transformed as not to generate these passions ; for it is mainly in the early years that character is formed.

Mothers and nurses are the first instructors in militarism. Every time a child is slapped, a complicated turmoil of conflicting passions is aroused. The simplest and healthiest reaction is fury : " When I am older, I'll pay you out ". But if the person inflicting the punishment is an objection of affection, rage is complicated by other feelings. There is first bewilderment and terror, because the person to whom the child looks for protection, who stands between it and the perils

of the outer world, suddenly becomes part of that world, herself a peril, and one from which there is no escape into a protecting shelter. This produces a sense of friendlessness and isolation, a baffled feeling that physical force is master, and a first lesson in the doctrine that "most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly". The mother who, after causing her child to cry, relents, and comforts it by caresses, is increasing the damage by producing an association between love and the infliction of pain, out of which spring both sadism and masochism. Moreover she produces a belief that the world is irrational and governed by no fixed principles. In this way, the old-fashioned mother, who believes in physical punishment as the best means of moral education, lays the deep foundations for a love of combat, and trains her sons to wish to fight and her daughters to wish their men to go to war.

I know that those who have never studied child psychology find all this difficult to believe. They think that children's emotions are volatile and superficial ; they know that a child that has been slapped may still love the slapper ; they remember that they were slapped, and are convinced that they grew up perfect characters. They do not take the child's feelings seriously because the child

has no power. In Shakespeare's times, tragic emotions were only permitted to monarchs and great nobles. Turgenev astonished Russian society by suggesting, in his *Sportsman's Sketches*, that the emotions of serfs were not very different from those of their masters. The general view has always been that the emotions of those who have no power are laughable. When I was a child, I was told : " You mustn't have your little likes and dislikes ". Being already of a metaphysical and mathematical turn of mind, I could not see why my likes and dislikes should be " little " ; there seemed no reason why the size of a person's emotions should be proportional to the size of his body. But I was, of course, too prudent to express this doubt ; I merely resolved inwardly that, when I came to have children, I would not treat them with derision or contempt. I am firmly persuaded that those who fail in this way, especially if they add physical cruelty, to which I was never subject, are laying the foundation for love of violence, and for a character which will rebel against perpetual peace as a prison to impulses of rage.

Apart from actual physical punishment, constant interference with perfectly innocent impulses has almost as bad an effect. Primitive mothers interfere very little with their children, and only

when some real danger threatens. But uneducated mothers in civilized communities have none of this primitive calm, and behave very often as if their children were a perpetual irritation to them. "Sit still", "Be quiet", "Don't do that", are constantly recurring phrases, all uttered in an angry voice. The desire for physical activity, which is instinctive in every healthy child, is thwarted, and black thoughts take the place of harmless actions. The idea of discipline grows up, first as something to be endured with pain and in later years as something to be inflicted with pleasure. The mother who bullies her child is usually taking an unconscious revenge upon the mother who bullied her.

Schools have very greatly improved during the present century, at any rate in countries which have remained democratic. In the countries which have military dictatorships, including Russia, there has been a great retrogression in the last ten years, involving a revival of strict discipline, implicit obedience, a ridiculously subservient behaviour towards teachers, and passive rather than active methods of acquiring knowledge. All this is rightly held by the governments concerned to be a method of producing a militaristic mentality, at once obedient and domineering, cowardly and

brutal. What are called "modern" schools have been extirpated in Germany, Italy, Austria and Poland. From the practice of the despots in these countries, we can see that they agree with the advocates of "modern" education as regards the connection between discipline in schools and a love of war in later life. If men are to love peace and freedom, boys must have some experience of them. There should be, in schools, as little discipline as is compatible with the acquisition of knowledge, and no corporal punishment whatever. And knowledge should, as far as possible, be so presented as to seem to the children a benefit to themselves, not a wanton imposition of tyrannous adults.

Esprit de corps, which schoolmasters find convenient, is an obstacle to the love of peace. It is almost always in some degree competitive, and tends to confine the social consciousness to a small group. It is, of course, impossible that a child should have any strong social consciousness directed towards mankind at large, and therefore the smallness of the group is not, in itself, a valid ground of objection to *esprit de corps*. The objection lies in the opposition to other groups. It is this that makes it an effective psychological preparation for a narrow nationalism, which is unable to conceive

the welfare of one's own country except as something achieved at the expense of others. Social co-operation, whether in boys or men, is easy to produce by the cement of a common enmity, but when produced in this way it is a source of evil. If it is to be a desirable quality, it must spring from a common effort towards some end not involving victory over any one else. Acting a play, for example, has this merit. It has the further advantage that the co-operation does not consist in all doing the same thing, but in all doing different things which contribute to a single result. Much co-operation in all doing exactly the same thing, as in drill, for example, is deadening to individuality, and tends to produce excessive obedience, or, correlatively, excessive desire to command.

The problem for the educator who is not content with obedience and discipline as sources of social cohesion is difficult, but not insoluble. He has to preserve individuality without producing anarchy. This means that what is necessary in the way of social co-operation must be not very difficult, and must not involve any very severe repression of impulse. This, in turn, means that the child must, from the first, be so handled as to have only slight impulses towards rage and cruelty and

destruction ; that he must, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, expect his companions to be friendly ; and that he must find his environment a help rather than a hindrance so long as his activities are not such as to cause injury to others. Bad parents may so twist the child's nature that by the time he goes to school it is almost impossible to undo the harm, but given wise parents, a wise school can carry on their work, and produce an adult who is vigorous but not tyrannical, spontaneous but not destructive, self-directed but not anarchic. I do not say that this can be done in every case, for bad heredity or bad health may defeat even the best system. But what matters politically is the result on the great majority. I am sure that, by wise education beginning in the earliest years, the impulses which lead to a love of war can be made rare and politically unimportant. Such education, if peace is ever to become secure, will have to be inaugurated everywhere, if necessary by the direct action of the international authority.

So far, in relation to education, we have considered only the training of character. This is, I think, what is of most importance, but certain intellectual aspects of education have also a bearing upon our problem. Bias and credulity are characteristics

which are very useful to the war-monger ; it will be necessary, in their place, to develop impartiality and a measure of scepticism. History must be taught in the same way in all countries, and by means of text-books sanctioned by the international authority. There must be no patriotic propaganda, no Empire Day or Flag Day or Fourth or Fourteenth of July. The power of resisting rhetoric must be trained ; speeches by eminent orators on opposite sides should be broadcast, and the pupils should be encouraged to see the fallacies of both. A scientific habit of mind should be cultivated, and a judicial power of weighing evidence. In teaching history, the excited nonsense believed on either side in every dispute should be set forth, and the capacity of excitement for producing folly should be emphasised. For, if peace is to be preserved, mankind must learn not to be divided into hostile camps by opposing irrational fanaticisms. Believing nonsense may be pleasant at the moment, but on a large scale it is a danger to the community.

Finally, certain moral ideals are important. No moral teaching is of much use unless it is in harmony with the character of the pupil ; if it involves restraint of any fundamental impulse, it will somehow be evaded by means of myths and self-

deception. But given a character which is on the whole receptive, a moral code is useful in restraining those occasional bad impulses to which everyone is liable. Impulses of envy and cruelty, under whatever disguises, must be recognized for what they are, and must, so far as possible, be prevented from influencing conduct. The sense of justice must be cultivated, from the nursery onward. Men must learn to value, for others and for themselves, such things as happiness and intelligence, and there must be a wish to make human life a co-operative effort after ends that all can enjoy. But all this is to be much less an explicit moral code than a spontaneous result of the early training of character.

In our pursuit of the conditions for permanent peace, we have been led into a very Utopian world. Are we to infer that the hope of an end to great wars is still very distant? Perhaps; but it is not impossible that great revolutions in human affairs may come much sooner than most people are inclined to believe. One can imagine all Europe prostrate after a great war, leaving the United States almost omnipotent. Americans might be moved to the point of saying: "Wars must cease". Humanity would move the general public, and the desire for safe investment of capital in the

work of European reconstruction would move the captains of industry. An international government, at first an offshoot of the government in Washington, might thus come into existence. And from that beginning all the rest might follow. This is only one possible road to peace ; many others can be imagined. I do not venture on prophecy ; I say only that to prophesy what is bad, as regards the not immediate future, is just as rash as to prophesy what is good.

Peace and Current Politics



THE PACIFIST FINDS HIMSELF, IN RELATION TO current politics, in a somewhat difficult position. The matters with which he is concerned are urgent, since a great war may break out at any moment ; he cannot, therefore, be content with slow propaganda that may bear fruit fifty or a hundred years hence. He must aim at influencing public opinion and governmental action during the next year or two, for, if he fails to do this, war will so change Europe that what anybody in a belligerent country thought before it took place will be of no account. The pacifist, however, can hardly hope to convert a majority to his full creed within the next year or two, since he has to go against mental habits which have existed since organised war began some six thousand years ago. The believer in collective security has not this

difficulty ; he can appeal to trite maxims such as " thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just ". The pacifist can retort : " Thrice is he armed that hath no quarrel at all ", but this is not very effective, and gives an impression of submissiveness and Uriah Heep-ish humility which is unpleasing. Neither Uriah Heep nor the Vicar of Bray can be accepted as the pacifist's patron saint. But to explain where the pacifist is unyielding and in what his pride consists, takes time. The religious pacifist, it is true, can appeal to the Sermon on the Mount, and to the text " We ought to obey God rather than man ". Even the most violent militarist can understand this point of view, but the merely rationalistic opponent of war has a more difficult task. He must, therefore, if he is to be of any use in the present crisis, find ways of co-operating with men who do not share the whole of his creed.

Pacifism as a long-term policy leads, as we saw in the last chapter, to a complete programme, involving an international government and international ownership of raw materials. But advocacy of these distant objects will do nothing to avert war during the next few years, and yet that, if possible, is what every pacifist must wish to see achieved. And if he can find any considerable

body of opinion which works in ways that make this result more probable, he will be wise to co-operate with it. As an individual, he will adhere to his full creed, and do what he can to spread it, but as a man concerned with the present action of the State he will be willing to work with men who share only a small part of his beliefs.

A practical programme must depend upon an estimate of the international situation. I will briefly repeat the conclusions to which previous chapters have led us.

War between Germany and the U.S.S.R. seems almost inevitable, unless (what is not impossible) they make an alliance for the re-partition of Poland. This war will probably involve France, and is not unlikely to involve Great Britain. The friend of peace in France should work against the Franco-Soviet Alliance; the friend of peace in Great Britain should oppose commitments to Russia, and to France also so far as is possible without breach of faith. In America he should support the policy of neutrality. He should avoid the crusading spirit, as shown, for example, in relation to Abyssinia and Spain, on the ground that even the best cause is not worth a great war. He should oppose all increases of armaments, on the ground that they never make war less probable, and can only

make it more destructive when it comes. All these are matters within the region of practical politics at the present moment.

It would not be wise to attempt the formation of a new pacifist political party ; this would only isolate pacifists and destroy their political influence until that distant date when they achieved a clear majority. Pacifist organisations should be unpolitical, leaving their members free to belong to any party ; but within each party pacifists should bring pressure to bear in favour of the policy which seems to them most likely to prevent the outbreak of war, or to minimise its extent if it does break out.

Pacifists have to face two kinds of disagreement, or perhaps I should say three. There are those who glorify war and consider peace a mere interlude, like sleep. These are to be found now chiefly in Germany and Italy, but they were common in England while we felt strong. At the outbreak of the Crimean War, almost everybody in Great Britain welcomed the return to a nobler idealism after the base years of money-grubbing. The fact that money-grubbing consisted in creating useful commodities, while the idealism of war showed itself in killing helpless peasants conscripted by the Tsar, did not prevent Tennyson

and the rest of the pack from promulgating their bloodthirsty nonsense.¹ The same thing happened at the outbreak of the Boer War and at the outbreak of the Great War. But fear of the aeroplane has induced a different mood ; we now leave the praise of war to Germans and Italians, and are ourselves acutely aware of the superior merits of peace. So are, within limits, the French, and within still narrower limits, the Russians. So far as Western Europe is concerned, the pacifist no longer has to contend with the man who thinks war glorious on its own account and would be unhappy if he thought it could be abolished.

The second set of opponents that pacifists have to face are those who, while admitting that war is an evil, are nevertheless convinced that it is the only method for the achievement of certain desirable objects. Marxists believe that Socialism demands a class war, and cannot be achieved by peaceful methods ; if they are Communists, they identify the proletariat with the U.S.S.R., and hold that support of that Power is the practicable form of the class war. This leads to awkward situations, similar to those which resulted, in the

¹ See the effusion in "Maude" in praise of "the blood-red blossom of war with the heart of fire," already mentioned in Chapter IX.

sixteenth century, from identification of the Catholic faith with the States of the Church. The allies of the Soviet Government must not be troubled by revolutionary or anti-militarist propaganda, but must be supported in all the turns and twists of their international policies. The war by which the objects of Communism are to be achieved thus ceases to be a class war as formerly conceived, and becomes an ordinary war between national States. In spite of this change, the dogma that war is necessary remains. The pacifist, therefore, can have only a very restricted field of co-operation with the convinced Communist. Before any considerable measure of co-operation becomes possible, it will be necessary to convince Communists that a modern war between national States is not the road to their millennium.

The third and most important class of opponents that pacifists have to meet are those who believe in some more or less warlike method of preventing war. Some say : The system of collective security can still prevent war. Others say : If we avoid alliances but arm ourselves sufficiently, no one will dare to attack us, and we shall be safe. Those who hold either of these two views, if they are genuine in their wish to preserve peace, can be persuaded of the pacifist case, assuming it to be valid, or at

any rate of the part of the case that is of urgent immediate importance. To effect this persuasion should be the first business of the pacifist in practical politics.

There should not be much difficulty in demonstrating convincingly that collective security, which might conceivably have been a successful policy if vigorously enforced at the time of the Japanese coup in Manchuria, is now merely another name for the division into two camps which its adherents profess anxiety to avoid. There is no reason to suppose that Germany, Italy, and Japan will fear to challenge the League of Nations, which, for these purposes, is merely Great Britain, France, and the U.S.S.R. I think the only reason for reluctance to admit the hopelessness of collective security as a means of preserving peace is the difficulty of finding an alternative. The pacifist method secures peace only in the countries that adopt it, and then only by removing all self-assertion in international affairs. If we could enforce peace by the collective system, our love of power would be satisfied : we should, without firing a shot, have compelled other nations to do as we wish. We are convinced, it is true, that what we wish, namely peace, is to the interest of other nations as well as to our own ; nevertheless, so long as they do not think so, our national pride

is gratified if our policy prevails. This gratification must be sacrificed if the pacifist policy is adopted, for in that case we no longer attempt to influence the actions of other nations by means of threats. It is this sacrifice that causes a psychological reluctance to admit the impossibility of securing peace by the collective method. There is, of course, also a belief—in support of which I have never seen any convincing arguments—that, even in the absence of any commitments, we should find it impossible to remain neutral in a great European war. There is yet another belief—which, though sometimes advanced by serious economists, is quite obviously untenable—that such a war would cause us as much suffering if we were neutral as it would if we were involved. To combat all such contentions convincingly is not difficult, and it should prove possible to change at least the official policy of the Labour Party, which would be much facilitated by the universal respect felt for Mr. Lansbury.

In the Conservative Party, freedom from “entangling alliances”, which is a part of the pacifist policy, and the part of most immediate importance, is desired by a considerable section, partly on its own account, and partly because fear of Germany and dislike of Russia are evenly balanced. Many Conservatives, including a large proportion of

officers in the Army, Navy, and Air Force, are keenly conscious of the horrors of the next war, and anxious to avoid them if they can do so without betraying their principles. I do not think it can be said now, as it could formerly, that one section of political opinion in England is more warlike than another. The pacifist movement should, therefore, be strictly non-party. The League of Nations Union showed how successfully an agitation whose purpose is peace can be conducted. Its work has been useful in generating a peace sentiment, but this sentiment can no longer find satisfaction in the League, even with an amended constitution. It is noteworthy that, in the Peace Ballot, the majority on the strictly pacifist issues was much greater than on the question of sanctions which might be military. Since the Abyssinian fiasco, the feeling for entire abstention from continental wars has grown much stronger, but has found no adequate political expression. To influence the politicians, a great movement will be needed, proving, as the Peace Ballot proved, the overwhelming strength of public opinion against war, but not liable, owing to a simpler and more uncompromising programme, to the kind of betrayal that befell those who believed what Ministers said during the last General Election.

The nationalisation of the armaments industry is

an important measure which all pacifists should support, and which M. Blum has already carried through in France. This is, of course, a reform which can be supported by many who are not pacifists ; on the one hand, it may be taken as an instalment of Socialism, and on the other hand as the removal of a sinister interest which helps to manufacture warlike feeling as well as munitions. There is a difficulty in defining what are to be considered to be armament firms. It is obvious that the chemical industry and the dye-stuff industry should be included. There is a case for the inclusion of steel, in spite of its importance apart from war. But even with the narrowest definition, it would be an important step in advance to confine the manufacture of munitions to the State.

The pacifist must avoid fanaticism himself, and must endeavour to prevent it in others. Fanatical pacifism leads to a desire for martyrdom, a belief that those who fight are wicked, and a tendency to quarrel with other pacifists on small points of doctrine. It makes co-operation very difficult, and produces a state of mind in which it is almost impossible to present a doctrine persuasively. Fanaticism of every other kind is a force tending towards war. Nationalism has been, since 1848, the most harmful form of fanaticism, but party

feeling has become almost as bad. The pacifist must do what he can to prevent the belief that one political group consists of saints and another of ruffians. If you could persuade the "Saturday Review" that some Bolsheviks are decent people and some Nazis are not, you would have done something to promote peace, and so you would if you could persuade the "Daily Worker" that some Nazis are decent people and some Bolsheviks are not. This kind of fanaticism as to personal character is derived from the doctrinal kind, of which, in former times, theology furnished the great example. But now politics has replaced theology as the field for intolerance. Fascism and Communism, to take the most notable examples, both think themselves so important that they are worth establishing at the cost of no matter how much war and bloodshed and judicial or unjudicial murder. The pacifist cannot hold any belief with this degree of violence, and should try to prevent others from doing so.

I do not mean that the pacifist cannot have beliefs which he holds strongly and for which he is willing to suffer, for clearly he must have such beliefs if he is to effect anything in a violent world. But his beliefs must have enough breadth to prevent them from becoming cruel, and must be kept tolerant by kindly feeling. Fanaticism springs from the

pursuit of some one narrow end at the expense of all others. A remarkable example is given in Henry C. Lea's *History of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages*. A small sect grew up in Italy which held the heretical opinion that it is wicked to eat meat. No one would have objected to vegetarianism as a practice, but as an ethical doctrine it came within the purview of the Inquisition. The sect was persecuted and its adherents took refuge in the mountains, from which they made descents as freebooters, since the barren summits afforded no sustenance. At length armed bands surrounded them, and made their marauding expeditions impossible, but they still managed, by night attacks, to kill a certain number of their besiegers. It was only animals that their creed forbade them to eat ; as to cannibalism, it was silent. Accordingly they subsisted upon the flesh of their persecutors. At length they were overcome, and their leader, without a groan, endured the most appalling tortures, which were ended at last by his death.

This is at once a true story and a parable. These men passed, within a few years, through the whole evolution that separates Mazzini from Mussolini, Kant from Hitler, and Robert Owen from Stalin. Vegetarianism—the most harmless doctrine imaginable—merely because they believed in it fanatically,

led logically to strange horrors. Any doctrine, held fanatically, becomes a justification for any atrocities in its defence ; but these inevitably affect the character of those who perpetrate them, and cause the end to be lost to sight in a flood of violence. When the fanatics cannot succeed otherwise, they resort to war, and in the course of war they almost inevitably lose sight of everything except the lust after victory and dominion. The pacifist, therefore, should see in fanaticism his most dangerous enemy, apart from mere direct greed and self-assertion. A good end, if it cannot be achieved without wholesale slaughter, cannot be achieved at all. The pacifist, when he mixes in practical politics, must remember that this is his belief, and must do what he can, on each particular occasion of bitterness, to cause this belief to be shared by others. For only so can any real peace be achieved.

Individual Pacifism



IN THE FOLLOWING CHAPTER I SHALL CONSIDER what can be done by an individual who accepts the views as to national policy which we have now arrived at. Assuming that you wish your own country to disarm even if no other great country does so, and to renounce war though the rest of the world remains warlike, what can you do personally towards bringing about some approximation to this policy? Clearly it is worth while to make great efforts. When a man's income is jeopardised, he makes great exertions to save it; a war will almost certainly deprive you of your income, whether earned or unearned. If one of your children has a dangerous illness, you take great pains and spend anything that you can afford in order that a cure may be effected; war will be a very dangerous illness of all your children at once. When a disaster

occurs, such as an explosion in a colliery, people's sympathies are aroused, and steps are taken to mitigate the sufferings of the widows and orphans ; but a great war will be comparable to hundreds of thousands of such disasters. Hospitals are kept up by voluntary contributions, but much larger contributions are made, in the form of income tax, to preparations for inflicting on a vast scale just such sufferings as hospitals exist to prevent. Europe spends vast sums on educating children, and other vast sums on preparations to kill them. If you have any care for your own interests, any sympathy with others, or any desire for the preservation of civilised society, you will do what you can to prevent war.

But can the individual do anything? you may ask. The forces against which you have to contend are organised and colossal ; the holders of power are remote, and work largely in secret ; governments elected to do some one definite thing proceed at once to do the exact contrary. The consequence is a widespread feeling of despairing impotence. Every canvasser knows the voter who says : Why should I vote for either party, since each is sure to betray its followers ?

Overwhelming popular feeling can, however, overcome all the inertia of politicians. The anti-slavery movement was a case in point. In the

accounts of the Congress of Vienna, it is astonishing to find cynical old Tories such as Castlereagh compelled to insist on abolition of the Slave Trade, and even, to the amazement of the other cynics with whom they were negotiating, prepared to offer other nations substantial material advantages in return for co-operation in this purely idealistic purpose. The movement was victorious and the Slave Trade ceased.

There is at present in England an overwhelming popular feeling in favour of peace, and there is no reason why this feeling should be impotent. It has suffered hitherto from a mistaken policy, namely, the policy of collective security. But this policy has broken down, and something more drastic is obviously needed. It must be a policy so simple that every man and woman can understand it, and that no set of politicians can pretend to carry it out when they are secretly defeating it. And it must be a policy which goes direct to the goal. The purpose is peace, and the way to achieve it is to say : *We will not fight.*

The first step towards overcoming the sense of individual impotence is combination. Organisations pledged to complete pacifism exist ; their membership is rapidly growing, and an isolated individual who joins them will find himself no longer isolated.

He will realise that he need not be a passive victim, but can, in union with others, exert an influence which may change the policy of his country and transform the history of the world.

The man who believes that no good can come of war should not only try to prevent his country from fighting, but should himself refuse to fight even when his Government calls upon him to do so. Some might deny this. They might say : If war came, I should regret it, but I should still wish to play a citizen's part, and should refuse to stand aside while others were suffering in my defence. In the present chapter, I shall consider the arguments in favour of this view, and give my reasons for disagreeing with it.

Various arguments may be adduced in favour of the view that, however disastrous war may be, every citizen should be willing to fight when war has broken out. In the first place, since there will certainly be conscription, it will be impossible to refuse to fight without breaking the law, and it may be argued that the law should always be obeyed, even when it is bad. It must, I think, be admitted that respect for the law is a very important element in civilised life, and that it is a grave matter to diminish it. But it is clear that obedience to law, like every other principle derived from arguments

of general utility, must have its limits. I know well that this is a dangerous doctrine, and that the claim to set up one's own individual judgment in defiance of legally constituted authority leads logically to anarchy. At the same time, almost all great advances have involved illegality. The early Christians broke the law ; Galileo broke the law ; the French revolutionaries broke the law ; early trade unionists broke the law. The instances are so numerous and so important that no one can maintain an absolute principle of obedience to constituted authority. Perhaps it will be said that it may sometimes be justifiable to break the law when it is held that the form of government should be changed, for example, when believers in democracy rebel against an absolute monarch, or—shall we add?—when believers in Fascism rebel against a democracy ; but that when the form of government is approved there can be no justification for illegal resistance. I do not myself accept this view : if I had been Galileo, I would have proclaimed my discoveries whatever government had forbidden me to do so. But in any case it is not applicable to the war resister. If he holds, as I do, that the ultimate cure for war is an international government, he is not bound, according to the above principle, to obey a national government in such a matter as

war, which involves its external relations. I do not think, however, that any general principles can settle this question. We must weigh the evils of war against the evil of disobedience to law, and decide on which side the balance lies.

A few words about the conscientious objectors in the last war may help to clear up the problem. It must be admitted that they were few, that they had no influence on the course of events, and that they failed very completely to win support in public opinion. They were few, partly because mass suggestion is hard to resist, and partly because most people found prison with obloquy more unpleasant than the trenches with glory. They failed to affect public opinion because they were thought to be shirkers : in spite of all evidence to the contrary, facing death at the front was thought to require more courage than facing disgrace in prison. It is true that, after the war had been over for some years, public opinion in Labour circles changed ; former conscientious objectors were elected to Parliament, and some even became members of the Government. But while the war lasted the general view was that the Government treated conscientious objectors far too leniently.

Can it be said that they achieved anything ? In the first place, such of them as did not change their

opinions were qualified to form the nucleus of a future and larger organisation of war resisters. This may prove very important. Apart from that, I can only report what I felt myself. The war, it seemed to me, was folly, and every bit of energy that could be diverted from the business of killing was so much to the good. This was a reason, not only for oneself refusing to kill, but also for providing as much innocent work as possible. Policemen, who might otherwise have been drafted into the Army, were kept busy making inaccurate reports of pacifist speeches for the benefit of Scotland Yard ; prison officials were kept from the front by the need of guarding conscientious objectors ; lawyers and lawyers' clerks were occupied with their misdeeds. In one way or another, quite a number of people were prevented from engaging in the official business of killing each other.

War resistance in the next war is likely to be a very different matter. We may assume that there will be conscription from the first, not only for military duties, or only for men, but for all work demanded by the needs of the war, and for all adults, both male and female. We may also assume that, unless the war resisters are very numerous, they will not again escape the death penalty. In the last war, Parliament, in enacting conscription, was led to suppose that war resisters were

not being made liable to the death penalty. This was false, and a number were condemned to death, but reprieved by the personal intervention of Mr. Asquith, then still Prime Minister.¹ It was a near thing, and they are not likely to have such luck next time. I think no man should now pledge himself to refuse war service unless he is confident that he will have the courage to let himself be shot as a traitor. Those who refuse civilian war work will, of course, not be treated so harshly, at least if they are women. But if they are not in prison they are likely to suffer severely from mob violence.

Is it worth while to incur all this? Various reasons may be urged to prove that it is not.

It must, I think, be admitted that, when once war has broken out, war resistance will have almost no effect upon the course of events, unless it is much more widespread than at present seems likely to the authorities. If, as we have seen reason to

¹ Under the Military Service Acts of 1916, a man was not liable to any penalty for mere refusal to join the Army, but he was taken by force to barracks, and, if he then disobeyed military orders, he was court-martialled like any other soldier. Disobedience in face of the enemy is punishable with death, and therefore some of those conscientious objectors who had been taken to France were sentenced to be shot, but the sentence was not carried out owing to the Prime Minister's intervention.

suppose, the essential fighting is in the air, it will not depend upon vast masses of men. It will probably end before new recruits can be employed. Refusal of war work, therefore, it may be said, though it will anger the Government, is not likely to do much more.

To this argument the only answer is that, when once war has begun, *no* course of action by individuals does any good, except to demand peace ; and even that will be made almost impossible by preventing meetings, dissolving pacifist organisations, and so on. The important thing that individuals can do is to influence government policy, and to undertake war resistance is the most effective way in which a pacifist can exert influence.

The problems we are considering do not, of course, arise for those who, on religious grounds, believe that all participation in war is wicked. For them it is not necessary to weigh pros and cons, since they enjoy a certainty which I envy them, but cannot share. I am very glad that such men exist ; what pacifism owes, more especially, to the Society of Friends, is immeasurable. But although I may arrive at the same practical conclusion, I cannot reach it by so short a road. What is right and what is wrong depends, as I believe, upon the consequences of actions, in so far as they can be

foreseen ; I cannot say simply “ War is wicked ”, but only “ Modern war is practically certain to have worse consequences than even the most unjust peace ”. And if I am to argue in favour of war resistance, I must try to show that it is likely to do good.

Against war resistance organised in advance, it may be urged that, if it becomes common in any one country, it is a source of military weakness, and therefore makes that country more likely to be attacked. No doubt in certain circumstances military weakness on one side may precipitate a war. It will be remembered that, in July 1914, Sir Edward (afterwards Lord) Carson and F. E. Smith (afterwards Lord Birkenhead) were engaged in promoting mutiny in the British Army and in buying arms from Germany for purposes of high treason ; and it was said that this circumstance encouraged the Kaiser in thinking the moment a good one for war. But all such arguments rest upon the naive assumption that the whole responsibility for a war is on one side. In fact, wars occur when what are considered vital interests are at stake, and each side thinks it can win. Whatever weakens one side diminishes its will to war as much as it increases that on the other side ; on the balance, therefore, it has no more tendency towards

war than towards peace. The fallacy is just the same as is involved in the contention that we shall make peace more secure by increasing our armaments.

What is virtually the same argument may be presented in a slightly different form. Pacifism, it may be said, is likely to be commonest in the best countries, and therefore to increase the relative power of the worst. Countries in which there is a dictatorship do not allow pacifist propaganda, and make short work of such few war resisters as have the courage of their convictions. We, who pride ourselves on our freedom, are misusing it—so it may be said—by a propaganda which, if successful, will put us at the mercy of more ruthless governments. The answer to this argument has been given in previous chapters. A great modern war, even if we are victorious, is almost certain to involve loss of those liberties which we shall be supposed to be defending, and to introduce, through terror and disorder, a military tyranny probably worse than the worst now existing, since the war which will have produced it will be worse than the late war. After the next war, the only men capable of building up anything good will probably be those who, through profound pacifist conviction, have escaped the contagion of war hysteria. The more numerous

such men are in any one country, the more hope there is that it may, in time, again build up some tolerable civilization.

The argument that the spread of pacifism in the more liberal countries should be opposed, because it may lead to the victory of aggressive reactionaries, suffers from the fallacy of all arguments for war in defence of liberal ideals : it assumes that, if we are victorious, we shall secure the objects for which we shall have fought. But war is as destructive of ideals as it is of life and property. The important thing is not to " win ", but to diminish the extent and duration of the war by every possible means. Every person who refuses to take part is so much to the good. And if pacifism on either side could make the war shorter, that would be a greater service to mankind than the victory of even the most righteous cause.

In favour of the refusal to take part in war, for those who accept the argument of previous chapters, the reasons are overwhelming.

To the ordinary man or woman, it seems a hopeless task to influence the policy of the Government. The drift towards war is observed in a mood of despairing apathy, but is thought to be as inescapable as bad weather. Recently when I was in a cinema, a bomber was being shown in a news film,

and the voice of the commentator said : " If we must be bombed, and it seems we must, we may as well be bombed by an up-to-date machine ". No one showed either pain or pleasure. Patriotic emotion was absent, but so, apparently, was the instinct of self-preservation. This apathy can only be cured if each individual who does not wish his children gassed, his city laid in ruins, his country devastated, and the civilisation of Western Europe wiped out, can be shown something definite to do about it. There is one very simple and very definite thing to be done : to join the body of men and women pledged to abstain from fighting and from war work, and to support whatever efforts they may collectively make to keep their country out of war. Such an action by one man or one woman will not have much effect, it is true ; but if it were taken by a million men and women, it would begin to influence policy, and if it were taken by several millions it would become an irresistible argument for the preservation of peace. War is an act of the organised community, and the organised community can prevent it. I believe that, if once the paralysing sense of impotence were removed, the desire for peace in Great Britain would soon express itself in such a form that no government could go against it. But to express the desire

for peace effectively, it is essential to show that, whatever the nominal issue, you will oppose any and every war that the folly of governments may be tempted to provoke. Nothing less drastic can be expected to stand firm against the excitement which the approach of war invariably produces.

The policy of unconditional resistance to war has the merit that, being simple and uncompromising, it can be held with fervour. If you are content to dislike war, while admitting that it may at any moment become unavoidable, you are compelled, in each crisis, to weigh pros and cons ; you will be informed of all the pros by every kind of public propaganda, while the cons will be concealed except from those who have some means of obtaining inside knowledge. If you are not persuaded, on any given occasion, that war is worth while, you will have to argue as to the particular issues, and, though you will probably be right, you will be unable to ascertain the facts which would prove you to be so, whereas your opponent will have been supplied by his newspaper with masses of " facts " to establish the case for war. In this way the great majority of the Labour Party were induced to take up a warlike attitude about Abyssinia ; they thought they were acting in defence of " collective security ", but what was really at stake was British imperial interests.

Foreign policy, especially British foreign policy, is very complex, and only a few people know all the relevant facts. It is easy for those few to present an issue in such a way as to secure the support of public opinion, even when they would get almost no support if all the facts were set forth impartially. If the friends of peace are to be politically effective, they must be unwilling to listen to arguments tending to show that this war is unlike all other wars, that all the guilt is on the other side, or that the millennium will come if our side is victorious. These things have always been said at the outbreak of a war, and have always been false. They will be said next time, and will still be false ; but censorship and propaganda will make it difficult to prove their falsehood at the moment. The only wise course, therefore, is to be prepared in advance by an absolute renunciation of war.

No suggested alternative gives the individual much chance of acting so as to make war less likely. The only way in which a person who has no exceptional advantages can be politically effective is by joining an organisation intended to further objects which he thinks important. If you vote at a general election, you do something to give effect to the policy of the party for which you vote ; but you cannot do much for peace in this way. Elections

are rare, and war may come any day. All three parties favour war in certain circumstances. Even if the party you support is successful, its policy in office is likely to be very different from that which it professed during the election ; of this the present Government has given a notable example in connection with Abyssinia. Moreover new issues arise, as to which nothing has been said when the Government secured the support of the country. For all these reasons the vote does not, in itself, give the ordinary citizen any effective control over foreign policy, unless he can secure the victory of some very simple and very radical policy, to be carried into effect by men who are known to be strongly in favour of it. If—to take a hypothesis—a new party, pledged to the gradual abolition of our armed forces, were to secure a majority, those who had voted for it would have some reason to hope that their vote would prove effective.

At this point, however, we come up against what I must admit to be a grave difficulty. No one can suppose that the Army, Navy and Air Force would quietly permit themselves to be disbanded. If the absolute pacifists could secure a parliamentary majority, one must expect, if they were unwise enough to be sudden and uncompromising, that a militarist *coup d'état* would dethrone Parliament.

If the pacifists wished to achieve their national objects quickly, therefore, they would have to begin with a civil war ; and if they were victorious, there would be not much left of their pacifism at the end. Moreover, it is scarcely likely that they would be victorious. Pacifism, by its very nature, cannot win by force, but must rely upon persuasion, and must persuade much more than a bare majority before it can carry its full policy into effect.

It follows from these considerations that pacifism, so far as the near future is concerned, must be individual, and must not expect to capture the State. It cannot capture the State except by such an overwhelming change in public opinion that a military dictatorship would be not politically feasible. In the meantime, pacifists must have their own principles, but must not expect to force them upon the more bellicose elements in the community. What they can expect to achieve meantime, in the political sphere, is to make public opinion more sceptical of the value of war and armaments, to stimulate resistance to increases in the armed forces, and to make it clear that, in the event of war, the Government will have to face a large amount of passive resistance. The effect might be sufficient to lead to the preservation of neutrality, and would almost certainly promote a more peaceable policy than

would be adopted if public opinion were bellicose.

Resistance to armaments is an important element in any policy designed to preserve peace, but is illogical so long as it is held that there are wars which ought to be fought. It is not compatible, for example, with upholding the Covenant of the League. This is an important merit of the complete pacifist position. Armaments use up public money which might be spent in useful ways, and create vested interests in the armament industry which make improvements in the international atmosphere more difficult, and sometimes, by intrigue, actually cause the failure of disarmament conferences. Nevertheless, so long as war is contemplated, armaments are necessary. Only the complete pacifist can oppose them without inconsistency.

The movement in favour of war resistance is not to be viewed primarily as political, but rather as a matter of personal conviction, like religion. It may spread fast enough to keep Great Britain neutral in the next war ; if it does, we may hope, without excessive optimism, that it will afterwards, when the next war has given its terrible object-lesson, spread to the whole civilised world. It may, on the other hand, end in failure. The pacifist will have a double portion of suffering in the next war : enemy bombs

will not spare him, and he will be an outcast among his own people. It may be that pacifists in considerable numbers will suffer the death penalty ; it is practically certain that, unless they are very numerous, a large proportion of them will be in prison throughout the war. But they will know that they are doing nothing to increase the horror. Those who support war, as it has become, support deadly attacks upon defenceless civilians, not in the hope of thereby saving the lives of civilians at home, but merely in order to keep the score even. To be free from responsibility for this vast atrocity is worth much in the way of obloquy and persecution. And if we believe, as most of us do, that somehow civilisation will revive, it is a source of strength to be able to believe that we have found the way that must be taken. The forces for war are immensely powerful, and to overcome them something more than politics will be needed. The world will need a widespread change of individual outlook, which cannot be achieved by any difficult, complicated, or partial policy, but only by a resolute belief, as strong as the passions that make for war, and appealing to feelings as deeply rooted in human nature.

The view that the situation is hopeless, and that Western civilisation is inexorably doomed to

self-destruction, is one which I cannot accept. On the contrary, I believe that if the friends of peace in Great Britain act boldly and energetically and quickly, they may save their own country from the Great Disaster ; and that the same is true of every other country where there is still a measure of personal liberty. But I do not think that this result can now be achieved by the ordinary traditional methods of politics ; for that the time is gone by. What is needed now is action by individuals, in unison, inspired by reason and passion intimately combined. The best passions to which, in the past, those who waged defensive war were able to appeal—love of home, the desire to protect one's children, the wish to preserve, for civilisation, the work of one's country and whatever has been good in the national traditions—all these, to those who have understood modern war, can no longer be invoked to sanctify even the most righteous conflict ; they can be invoked only in favour of peace. The defence of what we value may be difficult, it may have become in part impossible, but in so far as it is possible it is possible only through peace. Of the things that make life tolerable to a lover of peace, none are likely to survive on either side in a great war between technically efficient States. A brutalised and much diminished population, mad with

hunger and fear, and kept from anarchy only by a military tyranny more extreme than any yet known ; the disappearance of the arts and sciences, except as subsidiary to war ; the extinction of affection and trust and all voluntary co-operation ; the sudden descent into an ancient world of superstition and terror—these are the effects to be expected, on the victorious side as on that of the vanquished. If I am right in this—and the reasons which I have set forth, on the basis of official and expert pronouncements, are overwhelming—the duty of every friend of mankind, of every man who cares for any aspect of civilised life, of every patriot, and of every parent who desires the survival of his children, is simple and clear :

TO ABSTAIN FROM FIGHTING, AND FROM ALL VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION IN WAR BETWEEN CIVILISED STATES ; TO USE EVERY EFFORT TO PERSUADE OTHERS TO DO LIKEWISE ; TO BRING ALL POSSIBLE INFLUENCE TO BEAR TO PREVENT THE PARTICIPATION OF HIS COUNTRY IN WAR ; AND, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF HIS CAPACITY, TO AIM AT SIMILAR RESULTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES ALSO.

The argument by which this conclusion has been reached has appealed only to common sense and common humanity, not to any abstract ethical principle ; nor do I trouble to examine whether so drastic a policy is desirable at all times. I am concerned with the present time and the present prospect of disaster. To secure permanent peace will require great changes, economic as well as political, and the time for that will come if the present peril can be averted. But at this dangerous moment only an immediate policy can hope to succeed.

THE END

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